Create a Web Page–Without HTML, page 42

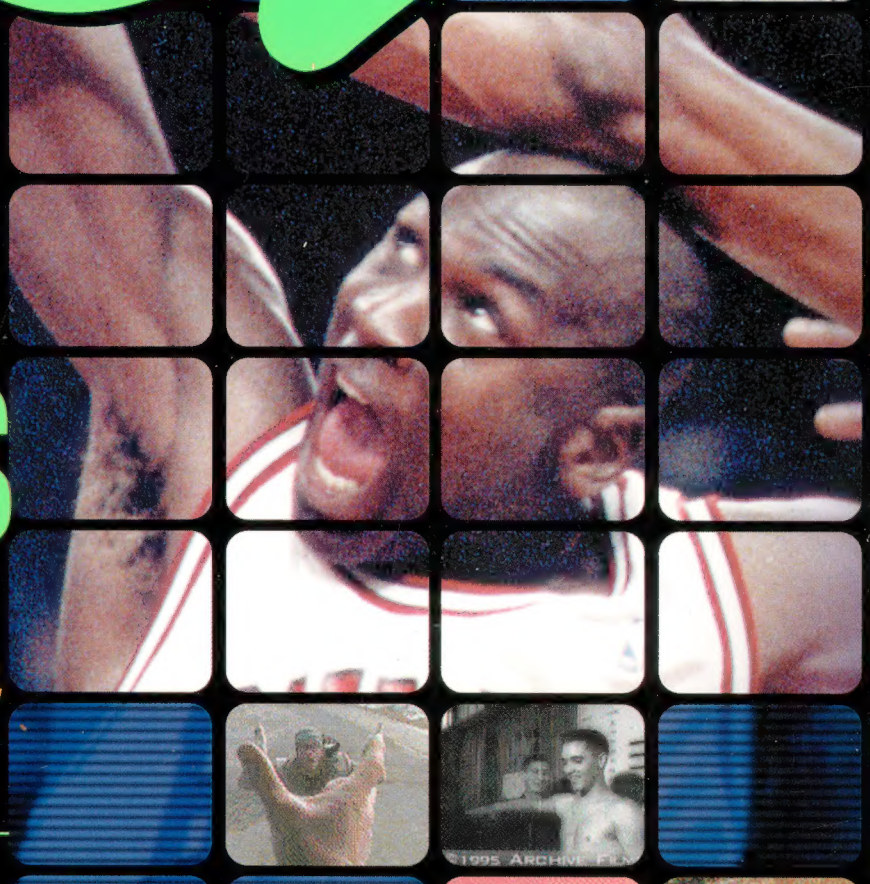
CD-ROM Edition

the net

Ultimate Internet Guide

11 96

Where To Go.
How To Get There.



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OUT

the net

Internet VIDEOS

Forget the networks. Forget cable with 100 channels. Forget the promise of 500 channels. Welcome to the 1,000,000-channel video library: the Internet. Here's where to find the best video, how to get at it, how it works, and how to post your own. *Page 20*

Faster! Faster!

Your modem—yeah, the 33.6 Kbps one you just got—is nearly dead. Within a year, expect new high-bandwidth alternatives to blow it away. These are the ones to watch. *Page 36*

HTML Authoring Without HTML

Sick and tired of HTML? We review four top visual Web page authoring tools. They're the future of page design. *Page 42*

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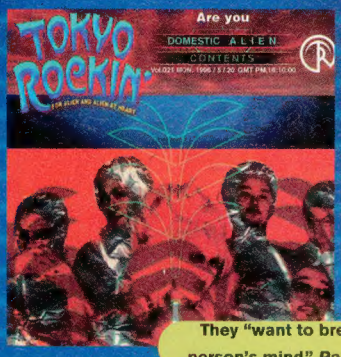
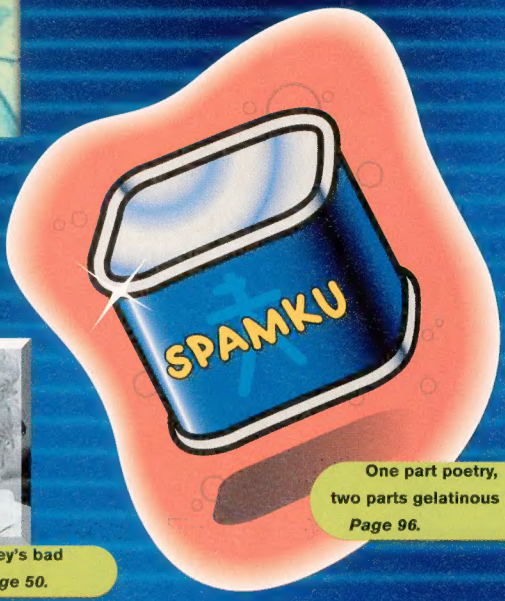
These guys just like to monkey around. *Page 77.*



They "want to break every person's mind." *Page 79.*



One part poetry, two parts gelatinous meat. *Page 96.*

Levi's: teetering on the edge of too much. *Page 52.*

Allen Toney's bad dreams. *Page 50.*

Reach out and blow someone up? *Page 10.*

Where To Go

Our Blue Pages directory of Web sites is an essential resource that will save you time online and get you where you want to be, no matter what you're interested in.

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How To Get There

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More, more, more

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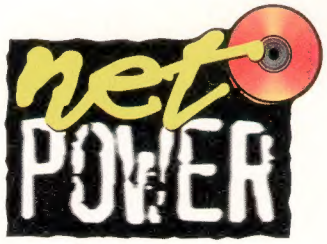

CD Contents

If you have the CD-ROM edition of *The Net*, turn to page 06 for information on our netPOWER disc. This month, we've gathered together loads of Internet videos for you, plus shareware, games, and demos.

If you didn't get the CD version, instructions are also on page 06 06

Microsoft Internet Explorer 3.0

*Connect time charges may apply to all offers.

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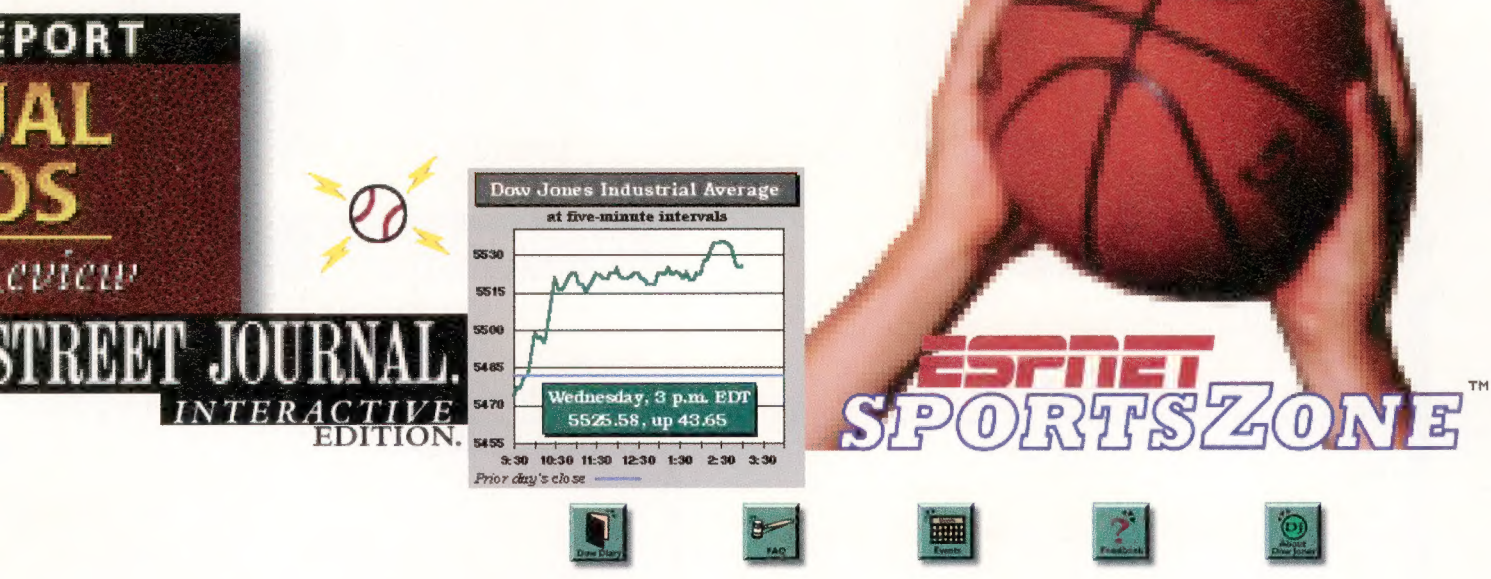

Introducing Microsoft® Internet Explorer 3.0. The new browser that's a step ahead of all the rest. It lets you experience all the coolest content, like sound and animation, that's being developed for the Internet today. It lets you customize the way you access and view the web. And it's yours to download right now, absolutely free.* From now through December 31, we have all kinds of special offers that make the experience even better: You get The Wall Street Journal® Interactive Edition, free. It's the web's leading source of business news, with 24-hour updated coverage of world business and deep background on thousands of companies and topics. You also get a free subscription to the premium areas of ESPNET™ SportsZone,™ the number one destination site on the web, including expert columnists, multimedia highlights, behind-the-scenes reports, in-depth player profiles, and more. Our new browser also gives you access to specially produced areas of Hollywood Online,™ including games and behind-the-scenes multimedia content. There's even special content on MTV™ Online and offers on other sites that can only be seen with us. Just go to www.microsoft.com/ie. Then click one button. And see what a real browser can bring you these days.

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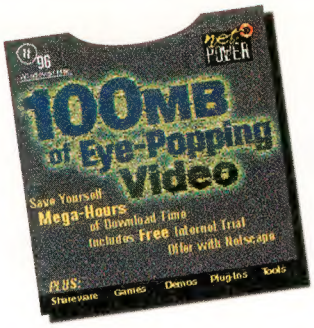
What's on the Disc



INTERNET VIDEO

(companion to our cover story, page 20)

Street Luge Crash
Bike **Jump**
Kerri **Strugg** Vault
Michael Jordan Dunk/**Lay-Up**
Five Easy *Pieces:* Chicken Sandwich
*A **Hard** Day's Night* Intro
Beavis as **Beatnik**
Oasis: "Don't Look Back in Anger"
Psycho Shower Scene
Drunken **Woman Arrest**
*This Is **Spinal** Tap:* 11
Garbage Man
Lighting a **BBQ** with Liquid Oxygen
Kids in the **Hall**/Head Crushing
Federal Building Implosion
Beavis Gets Stuck by a Javelin
Zest **Karaoke**
Les **Claypool** Drumming
LL COOL J: "Loungin"
Elvis in the **Army**
Lou **Gehrig's** Good-bye
Quayle/Bentsen Debate
Oklahoma City Bombing
Pearl **Harbor** Report
Butthole **Surfers:** "Pepper"
*Pulp **Fiction*** Trailer
Pulp Fiction **Outtake**
Homer **Simpson** "Star Trek" Scene
Reservoir *Dogs* Like a Virgin
Beastie Boys: "Sure Shot" Live
Tiananmen Square
*This Is **Spinal Tap:*** Lick My Love Pump
Taxi Driver: "**You Talkin** to Me?"
Trains **Colliding**
Trooper **Arresting** Lady
Trooper Hit and Run
O. J. **Simpson** Verdict
Tony **Hawk** Getting Air
Exploding **Whale**
Abe **Zapruder's** JFK Assassination **Film**
More...

HTML EDITORS

ActiveX Control Pad: Incorporate ActiveX controls into your pages fast.
Gomer: Easy-to-use HTML editor.
BBEdit Lite: *The* editor-of-choice for most Mac Web page designers.
Handler: Click, click, click. Presto: Web page.

Plus:

Windows
Aardvark • ANT_HTML 2.2 • Aspire • CMed • Web Page Creator • DiDa • EdWindows • Hippie HTML Editor Version 3.10 • HomeSite • HTML Assistant Pro 3 • HTML Builder • MatHTML
Macintosh
FormatHTML • HTML Pro • PageSpinner • WebWarrior
Cool Demos
Backstage: Create multimedia Web pages on the fly.
Flight Unlimited: Up, up, and away!
Painter 4 Pro: Get a gander at a top challenger to Illustrator.
Photoshop: Yes, it's here, on the disc.

Plus:

Windows
BUG! • Emergency Room • FreeHand • Monster Truck Madness
Macintosh
Action • Andromeda Series Filters • Deck II • George • Locus • PhotoGIF 2.0 • TechTool Pro
Windows and Mac
Beyond the Wall • Curious

INTERNET TOOLS

Cyberdog: Search and browse the Web in a whole new way.
Homer: Great IRC helper app.
NetBert: Daily updates of the pages of your choice.
WEB.MAX Retriever: Search 10 Internet engines at once.

Plus:

Windows
Autonomy, Inc.'s Web Researcher and the Press Agent • Bamba • Cache Master Offline Browser • CD Ejector • ColorHexer • Comic Chat • CoolTalk • EMULive • Here • Map This! • MIDInight Express 1.3 • Modem Status • NCSA Mosaic • NetProphet • News Xpress • Oracle PowerBrowser • ProStream • QuickTime • SciTech Display Doctor • Text Transmogrifier • ThumbsPlus • TrueSpeech Player • VidWatch-v1.02 • WinTelnet • FTP Pro • WinVN • WS_FTP
Macintosh
Anarchie–v1.6.0 • Black Night • Colleen's Photoshop Fun Pack Filter Plug-ins for Adobe Photoshop 3.0 • Finger • FreePPP 2.5 • GraphicConverter 2.4 (U.S.) • InterSlip • JPEGView 3.3.1 • MacTCP 2.0.6 • MacTCP Monitor • MoviePlayer 2.1 • NetPresenz • Newswatcher • Palace 1.5 • RealAudio Player • SerialSpeed 230–v1.4 • Smartdubbing • SoundApp

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NETPOWER'S SPONSERS

You can get to any of our sponsors through our HTML interface, or you can go directly to their folders on the disc. Here's how.
Windows 95 users
Run the Windows Explorer (usually under the Start menu, under Programs).
Click on D: (or the letter of your CD-ROM drive).
Go into the Sponsors folder.
Windows 3.1 users
Run the File Manager (from Program Manager, select File/Run, type WINFILE and click on OK).
Click on D: (or the letter of your CD-ROM drive).
Go into the Sponsors directory.
Macintosh users
Go to the Sponsors folder.

INSTRUCTIONS
How to use our disc

Windows 95
Insert the netPOWER disc into your CD-ROM drive.
Open Microsoft Internet Explorer 3.0 (if you don't have a copy, you'll find one you can install on the disc in the folder called MSIE). If you choose to use another browser, some of the features on the disc won't necessarily work.
Select File/Open.
Choose D:\START.HTM (assuming D is the letter representing your CD-ROM drive).
Windows 3.1
Insert the netPOWER disc into your CD-ROM drive.
Open Microsoft Internet Explorer 2.1 (if you don't have a copy, you'll find one you can install on the disc in the directory \MSIE). If you choose another browser, some of the features on the disc won't necessarily work.
Select File/Open File.
Choose D:\START.HTM (assuming D is the letter representing your CD-ROM drive).
Macintosh
Insert the netPOWER disc into your CD-ROM drive.
Open Microsoft Internet Explorer 2.1 (if you don't have a copy, you'll find one you can install on the disc in the folder called MSIE). If you choose to use another browser, some of the features on the disc won't necessarily work.
Select File/Open File.
Select START.HTM from the CD-ROM drive called netPOWER.

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From the Editor:

I'm sitting here in an office that's connected to the Internet by two full T1 lines: 3 Mbps (megabits per second) roaring directly into my PC. That's about 100 times what a typical 28.8 Kbps (kilobits per second) modem will do. On a good day. With a serious tail wind. And you know what? Downloading movies is still slow.

Yet industry pundits are claiming that the Internet is going to replace television. Of course, none of them can explain to me why I should spend four hours downloading a five-minute movie showing a bunch of chemistry nerds using liquid oxygen to vaporize a Weber grill. In 15 minutes I can run down to Blockbuster (or some other equally impersonal video store) and rent *Star Trek XXII: Aliens in Wheelchairs.*

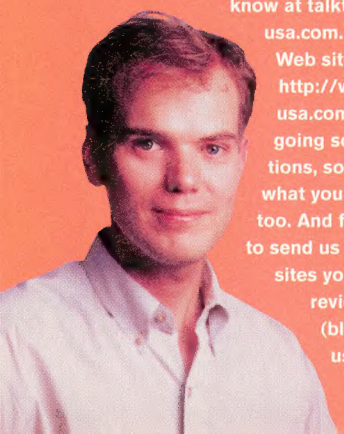
Sometimes, the pundits talk about "interactivity." They use sentences like "TV just can't match the interactivity of the Web" and "The Internet is just soooo interactive." After you hear a few of them talking like this, you get an urge to be very interactive with them–preferably with a baseball bat. Sure, it's kind of cool to think that you can vote on how a TV show should end, or order a pizza online. But, for the most part, these are things you can do right now with your telephone.

But if you take a minute, you can see the appeal.

What makes the Internet's video collection so amazing is just how eclectic it is. Right now we're witnessing the birth of the next television. Just like television in its early days, there's a dearth of contemporary entertainment. But already we can see the potential. TV is limited to a few hundred channels, even with cable. The Internet already has a few million "channels." We're just waiting to see what fills those channels up. Check out our cover story (page 20) to see just what kinds of amazing stuff you can get already–everything from footage of JFK's assassination to "Beavis and Butt-Head" reruns.

What's holding the content up is mainly bandwidth: Why supply content when nobody can download it? That's why this month's NetPower CD-ROM has more than 100 MB of video–that's like eight hours of download time. And our feature "Faster, Faster, Faster" (page 36) explains what upcoming technologies, such as cable modems and ADSL, will do to overcome the bandwidth barrier.

Am I right or am I right? Let us know at talktous@thenet-usa.com. And visit our Web site at http://www.thenet-usa.com. We're undergoing some renovations, so let us know what you think of those, too. And finally, be sure to send us URLs of Web sites you'd like us to review (blue@thenet-usa.com).



e-mail

Your Comments, Kudos, and Conversations
To e-mail us: talktous@thenet-usa.com

Kudos

I just wanted to say "kudos" on the articles so far about designing your own Web page with HTML. I had no idea it was this simple, or that you could use a simple text editor to create it. I look forward to future articles on this subject. Thanks!

Remy Kissel
remyk@juno.com

***The Net** replies: Next month: How to build the Golden Gate Bridge with paper clips, toast, and super glue.*

Nix on the Abbrs.

I just came online last month and enjoy browsing daily via Netscape 2.0. I picked up *The Net* yesterday, and I find your magazine very interesting and informative. In a day of extensive technobabble, you folks manage to reduce computer/Internet jargon to an elementary level. Your flow diagrams, how-to pages, and columns help lessen the pressure of the proverbial fire hose in the mouth, as it were. I think you've got a great magazine with terrific presentations. I particularly want to thank you for not expecting your readers to remember every abbreviation–keep spelling them out.

Fred
mcafeef@pixi.com

***The Net** replies: We eschew obfuscation.*

Small Font

Trying to read your fine magazine is very difficult. It cannot be read in the dim light of the den, or the bathroom either, for that matter. URLs in bold is a great help, but how about increasing the font size a little?

Roland Frechette
secheret@nh.ultranet.com

***The Net** replies: Mom always said: "Read in bright light or you'll go blind."*

Unfriendly Frames

Why did you change your site using Frames? If you like them, fine, but please offer a non-Frame version as well, or at the very least put in a re-size option. I have all of 130 pixels or so to see the content, and that just doesn't lend itself to readability.

Dave
dave@4guys.com

***The Net** replies: You're right. By the time you read this, we'll have done a redesign that eliminates the problem you're talking about. In the mean time, buy a bigger monitor.*

AOL

Hey! Have you guys checked out the new AOL 3.0 disk? It is great! The label comes off 10 times easier!

Alan E. James
ajames19@c-zone.net

***The Net** replies: The views of Mr. James do not necessarily reflect those of **The Net** magazine, any of its employees, or anybody else around here. He's funny, though, isn't he?*

Model Citizen

Who is the model/spokesperson in your magazine, issue 09/96, on page 35? She has to be the most perfect woman on the planet!

Brian Joseph
briscojo@gnatnet.net

***The Net** replies: Hillary Clinton. Thank you Photoshop.*

Why to Subscribe

Please tell me why I should subscribe to your magazine when I have the September issue lying in front of me, and a totally worthless CD lying next to it? I cannot use any of the plug-ins in it. It will not work with my Windows 3.11 system. You blithely tell me on the Web page that there may be a patch available to make it work in the future, but that doesn't help with the fact that all the plug-ins are for Win 95.

T. Michael Jones
tmichaelj@juno.com
lordyama@televar.com

***The Net** replies: We've been discovered: We're part of the worldwide*

conspiracy to make Windows 95 the Number 1 operating system in the world. All seriousness aside, you are correct in two regards: Our September interface was missing a part that would enable it to run under Windows 3.1, and most of the plug-ins are for Win 95. We fixed the first, but there's little we can do about the second.

Why to Subscribe, Part II

Bought a copy of *The Net* (the cheaper one without a CD-ROM) at the Colorado Springs airport while waiting for my spouse to return. Your article on how stuff gets around the Internet and plug-ins were really great. I immediately canceled my subscription to [another publication].

Thanx
Sid Morehouse
SAM37@prodigy.net

The Net replies: Cool.

HALitosis

In October's "Hollywood Hypes the Net," Andrew Hultkrans writes in the section on *2001: A Space Odyssey* that HAL is "an undefined acronym." While it may have been undefined in the film, Von Gunden and Stock write in their book *Twenty All-Time Great Science Fiction Films* (Arlington House, NY, 1982, page 191) that "HAL's name is an acronym formed by combining the first letters of the two major learning systems, Heuristic and ALgorithmic."

Stan Sieger
ax505@lafn.org
sieger@hotmail.com

The Net replies: Ham And Legs? Hy and Lois? Happy and Lucky?

Hollywood Shuffle

Andrew Hultkrans' article "Hollywood Hypes the Net: 10 Movies That Got It All Wrong" in your October issue is probably the single most idiotic waste of space I have had the misfortune to read this year.

What, pray tell, was the point? That movies are unrealistic? That movies are irrelevant to computer science? That depictions of computer operation in movies are simplified so that the films can appeal to a wider audience? I can answer all three assertions with my favorite monosyllabic colloquialism:

DUH!

Perhaps Mr. Hultkrans would be shocked to know that when people are killed in movies --they don't really die. None of the blood they shed is even real! The aliens in *ID-4*? Completely fake! I swear!

Furthermore, I guarantee that 99.9% of the 25 million people who went to see *Mission Impossible* could give a flying ... toaster whether or not the interface on the Powerbook screen bore any resemblance to the real thing!?!?!?! Gimme a break! *Mission Impossible* may not be the greatest movie, but who (other than Hultkrans) cares whether it, or any other action film, depicts the Internet realistically, or advances computer science one iota?

Yes, these movies are "dumbed-down," but that has nothing to do with how engaging the story is or isn't, and sometimes it's interesting to see how the filmmakers try to capture what is essentially an intangible and non-sensory experience, e.g., the "hacking scenes" in *Hackers* or *Disclosure*.

Tom Juarez
act4pay@aol.com

The Net replies: The aliens weren't real? You're probably going to tell me they didn't really blow up the real White House, too. Yeah. Sure.

wasting time going from dealer to dealer to find the perfect car.

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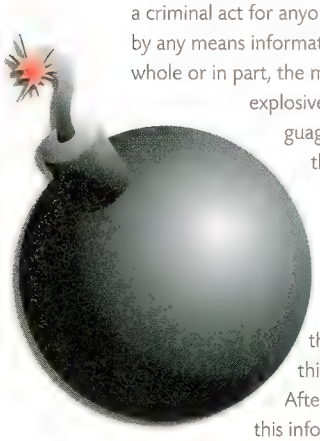
Bombs Away

Is the Internet Really More Dangerous Than Your Local Library?

If information is power, the Internet must be some kind of demi-god. You can find quotes from Poe, solutions to calculus problems, and the going rate for a case of 1988 Mondavi Cabernet Sauvignon. You can also find pornography, tips for using and making drugs, and just about everything you need to know about bombs. These last three are causing some people a lot of worry.

The U.S. government made an attempt to ban obscenity and pornography earlier this year with the Communications Decency Act. (At press time the CDA was suspended while the courts determine its constitutionality.) Now the legislature has passed, and President Clinton has signed, a comprehensive anti-terrorism law. An amendment to the law would have made it a criminal act for anyone to "disseminate by any means information pertaining to, in whole or in part, the manufacture of explosive materials." The language was changed in the final version to merely order the attorney general to study the feasibility of such a law.



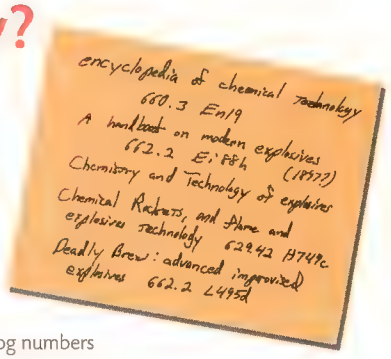
But, critics of this amendment say, is this furor worth it? After all, you can get all this information in your public library. With that in mind, we decided to look into how quickly we could find information about bombs and how comprehensive it was, on both the Internet and in a public library.

The Internet proved to be pretty easy ground to search. Within 45 minutes we had found The Terrorist's Handbook, with explicit and practical instructions on how to make your own bombs. For example:

"By taking any highly flammable material, such as gasoline, diesel fuel, kerosene, ethyl or methyl alcohol, lighter fluid, turpentine, or any mixture of the above, and putting it into a large glass bottle, anyone can make an effective firebomb." Molotov cocktails, anyone?

Of course, the Handbook is on a server in the Netherlands, putting it out of the jurisdiction of U.S. courts, and making any U.S. legislation ineffective. We found the Handbook from a link off the Electronic Frontier Outlaw Fringe **(http://www.virtualschool.edu/mon/Outlaws/)**, a site that documents sites about explosives, pornography, cracking, and nuclear weapons. The Fringe site and the Handbook discourage actually using the information they provide by including descriptions of what kind of trouble or how maimed someone could get from building bombs.

Then we went to the San Francisco Main Public Library. (Technically, we searched the library's Web site first.) Using one of the library's terminals we found some promising titles, including *Deadly Brew: Advanced Improvised Explosives,* 662.2 L495d. After scribbling book titles and catalog numbers on a scrap of paper, we went searching through the books. All of the really juicy ones were listed as being in the reference section, meaning they couldn't be checked out. And, when we got to the right shelf, we found most of the promised titles were actually missing. We looked around the tables, expecting to see a Unabomber-looking type madly scribbling down chemical names from a pile of books. It occurred to us that if someone were going to make bombs for any kind of public destruction, they probably wouldn't be averse to heisting a few library books.



The time it took to search the Internet and the library was about the same. The main difference was that if someone is using a book from the library, the information is temporarily (or permanently, if they stole the book) limited to that one person. With the Internet, more people can have the same information simultaneously. Greater distribution is a little bit easier, but a determined individual can find the same information in either medium.

–Wayne Cunningham

DO Something in Cyberspace

Exercising the belief that societal change comes about when you get a bunch of actors, rock stars, and models to make a public appearance, DO Something, the activist organization co-founded by "Melrose Place"'s Andrew Shue, is organizing Webstock '96 (http://www.webstock96.com). The event occurs at the Web site from Nov. 1 through 4, and will feature live chats with Cindy Crawford, Michael Stipe, and Ken Griffey, Jr. DO Something is using the festival as a lure to get kids interested in the Internet, and is coordinating with schools to get the message out. The online festival was scheduled to happen just before the 1996 elections so attendees will be energized to vote.

Project X
Apple Computer, Inc.

http://www.atg.apple.com/go/ProjectX/
Windows 95, Macintosh

Getting through a Web site can be pretty tedious: Click a link on the home page and go to another page; click another link and go deeper in; keep clicking links until you find what you're looking for. Unless you've bookmarked a page, anytime you want to return, you have to go through the same process again. Apple has come up with a solution to this problem called Project X, with which a Web site can be displayed as a set of tags, each representing a page or subject area floating in 3D space. Instead of clicking through links, you can fly right to the page you're looking for, double click on it, and the page gets downloaded into your browser. The Project X plug-in displays Meta Content Format (.mcf) files, a format designed by Apple for viewing information. MCF files can be created for Web sites, and even hard drive directories and FTP sites, with a variety of different programs written by third-party developers, which are listed on Apple's Project X site.

How Fast Will Your **VRML** Move?

Multi-user, 3D worlds are proliferating on the Internet, and graphics card manufacturers are rushing to get products out to support the new craze. But a card with a 3D graphics accelerator won't necessarily make your VRML navigation smoother, because there has been no common specification for how a computer processes 3D data. A standard may be emerging, however, in Microsoft's Direct3D.

Part of Microsoft's DirectX line of multimedia technology, Direct3D tells the computer how to display 3D spaces on a computer screen. So far, every major graphics card manufacturer, including Diamond, Trident, ATI, and Creative Labs, has agreed to support Direct3D.

Hardware is key, but software also has to incorporate the Direct3D specification. Of course, Microsoft's own Internet Explorer uses Direct3D for its VRML support. ATI has released a 3D accelerator card called the 3D Expression. It comes bundled with the WIRL browser by VREAM, which is written to use Direct3D. One of the more surprising adopters of the Microsoft specification, and an indication that it is the standard, is Netscape's Live3D technology, which allows browsing of VRML worlds with the Navigator browser. Mike McCue, director of advanced technology for Netscape, points out that Live3D is written to be compatible with Direct3D, and that it "supports multiple rendering engines, including RenderWare, RealityLab, OpenGL, and will soon support QuickDraw 3D."

Among custom 3D multi-user software, Worlds, Inc., was the first really usable world. Worlds has expanded on its Worlds Chat space, and is working on two different breeds of its technology: ActiveWorlds and Gamma. According to Brian Dunkeld, director of strategy and marketing for Worlds, "ActiveWorlds, which was to launch in early October, is going to be written toward the DirectX specification, while Gamma will be Java-based." Sony has been working on its own custom 3D, multi-user space under the auspices of its Sony Pictures ImageWorks division. Its browser is called Community Place, and Janet McAndless, director of Internet products for ImageWorks, says the browser "already supports DirectX Audio, and they are looking into Direct3D."

Currently, only the most devoted geeks are playing with VRML worlds: The fairly large file sizes require either a lot of patience or an ISDN or better connection, and a pretty beefed up computer is needed. Even with all this, frame rates are pretty jumpy and navigation is anything but smooth. With the widespread support it's getting, Direct3D should make life in a VRML world as simple as a walk around the block.

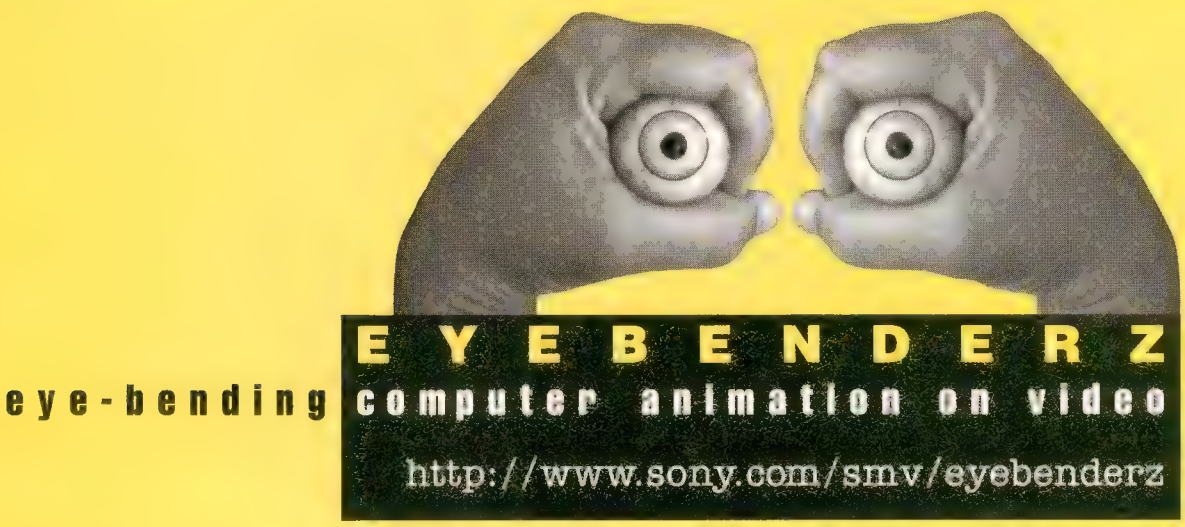
–Wayne Cunningham

NEWS DESK

Singapore declared its sovereignty from the "free world" by enacting the strictest Internet censorship law on the planet. The law covers the usual material, like pornography, but also bans publishing material critical of the government. While many "experts" claim the Internet's architecture makes it an uncensorable medium, Singapore has proven this supposition wrong by putting a firewall around its island country.

Unfortunately, the Singapore law is unclear on whether it bans chain e-mails that promise good luck if you spam 10 friends, relatives, and hapless strangers whose addresses you just happen to

continued on pg 12



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come across. This little guy, who claims to be a good luck totem, has circulated back into *The*

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Net's e-mail sphere recently. The last time we saw him was about 8 months ago, when he presumably set off on his ninth (as the latest e-mail claimed) trip around the world. Come on people, it's a virus. Kill it.

Speaking of viruses, or, at least, plagues, E-Data continues its quest to own all Internet commerce by suing a wide range of companies, including Compuserve, for infringing on a patent it holds. In the broadest interpretation, the "Freeny" patent covers electronic commerce. The validity and extent of the patent is currently being determined in court.

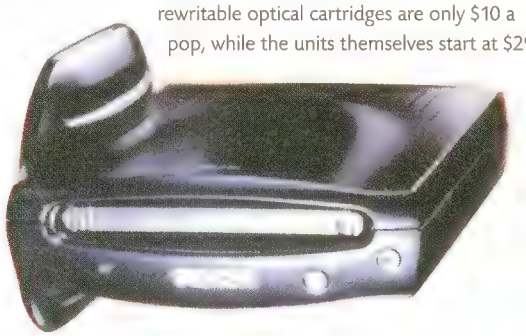
cyber future

Five Things to Make Your Internet Life Better

Wishbone and the Amazing Odyssey
Palladium Interactive
http://www.palladiumnet.com
(800) 910-2696.
Windows 3.1, Windows 95, Mac/Power Mac
This CD-ROM/Internet hybrid is a great way to get children started on a classical education. Wishbone, a dog, takes the place of Odysseus (Ulysses to all you Romans) just as he's beginning his journey home from Troy. Won't Calypso be surprised? $39.95.

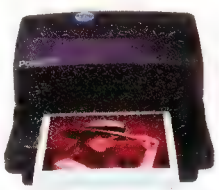
Meridian 59
The 3DO Company
http://www.3do.com
(800) 336-3506
Windows 95
Meridian 59 is a Multi-User Domain (MUD) gone fully 3D and graphical. It is a swords and sorcery type of world where players can fight monsters or other players to increase their skills. Thousands of beta testers have already formed guilds that new players can join. At press time, pricing had not been determined.

SYS.230 Personal Storage System
Olympus Image Systems, Inc.
http://www.olympusamerica.com/index.html
(800) 347-4027
DOS, Windows 3.1, Windows 95, Mac/Power Mac
Weighing in at 230 megabytes, SYS.230 is an effective way to transport large files and back up hard disks. The 3.5-inch, rewritable optical cartridges are only $10 a pop, while the units themselves start at $299.



CyberGeek T-Shirts
CyberGeek
http://www.cybergeek.com
male, female
Why pay $16.50 for a t-shirt when you get them free at computer conventions? Well, CyberGeek t's are the "future of fashion," or so says their advertising, and you can order them online. To go to a computer show you have to leave the house. Enough said.

PhotoPad
Polaroid
http://www.polaroid.com
Windows 3.1, Windows 95, Mac/Power Mac
Scanners are proliferating like mad because the Web has opened an era of digital imagery. The $299 PhotoPad is designed specifically for photos, as it can only do scans up to 4 x 6 inches. But it doesn't use up much desktop real estate, either.

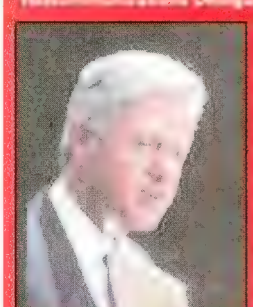


The Net's Handy Guide to the 1996 Presidential Election

With the 1996 presidential election coming up fast, we decided to find out how friendly the two major candidates are to the Internet. It's not that big of an issue in this year's election, and neither party has a campaign plank addressing it, but there is some key legislation that affects our online lives. Most Internet users are aware of the CDA, and then there's the whole issue of encryption technology, which is popular among software makers and privacy advocates.

William Jefferson Clinton (http://www.cgtk.com)

Pro: As president, Bill Clinton signed into law the Telecommunications Deregulation bill, which opened the market for broadband solutions by allowing cable companies to compete as Internet providers. The bill also included provisions to ensure that Americans get universal access to the Internet. President Clinton has supported and encouraged teaching American children computer and Internet skills, and participated in California's Net Day '96 by helping lay network cabling in a school.



Con: The Telecom bill, which President Clinton approved, also carried with it the notorious Communications Decency Act, the constitutionality of which is being decided in the courts. He continues to support the Clipper Chip, which would ensure the government's wiretap capabilities, and is against the exportation of strong encryption technologies.

Robert Joseph Dole (http://www.dolekemp.com)

Pro: Bob Dole voted for the Telecommunications Deregulation bill. He supports the pro-CODE bill, which legalizes the exportation of strong encryption software and stops the government from imposing encryption regulations through which it could secure its ability to decrypt messages. If elected, Mr. Dole promises to "promote policies that preserve and advance the openness and decentralization of computer-based communications."

Con: By voting for the Telecom bill, he supported the Communications Decency Act. In comparison to Clinton, Dole isn't much of an Internet activist. While he had an e-mail address as a senator, he currently has no published address.

☐ **It would be great if the Internet was more like a shopping mall.**

☐ **It would be great if the Internet was more like a post office.**

☐ **It would be great if the Internet was more like a human being.**

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Civilized **Disobedience**

Drue Miller

Drue Miller (drue@vivid.com) doesn't regret missing the '60s, because the '90s have better music and faster computers.

My friend Derek and I were watching a TV documentary about the 1960s the other night. It was a masterfully edited piece, and I got a little swept up in the emotion. "That," I said, pointing at a sea of angry people sweeping down a street in Oakland, "is what the Net should be about. People asking questions, making connections, inciting change." He looked at me and nodded agreement, but said it wasn't possible. "If you're surfing the Net, you're not in the streets."

True, if we're all at home watching the news, we can't be out taking part in it. But does being online automatically presume we're just passively consuming information? Can't we use the Net as a tool for change?

As I'm writing this, the Democratic National Convention is returning to Chicago and the newspapers are filled with wistful retrospectives of bleak 1968. Kids in the streets. Cops hitting the kids. Mayhem in the midst of an orderly proceeding.

Seems almost impossible these days. Who goes to protests anymore?

Not many of us. We'll debate abortion rights and flat tax proposals with great fervor online, but offline? Forget it. The Million Man March filled Washington, but the proposals for a Million Geek March never made it past e-mail.

And even if we all had the passion, we'd have difficulty finding the time.

But this doesn't mean we've given up on trying to effect change. We're just using different tools. Look at the online actions we've seen in the past year alone.

- Web sites were shrouded on December 1, 1995 in recognition of World AIDS Day (www.vivid.com/projects/online/shroud.html).
- Home pages everywhere sprouted blue ribbons (linked to www.eff.org/blueribbon.html) to protest the Communications Decency Act.
- Pages went black on February 8, 1996, the day President Clinton signed the Telecomm Bill (and CDA) into law.
- People were invited (via a widely distributed e-mail campaign) to help crash the White House's mailserver on March 1, 1996 (in protest of the CDA).
- And also to become plaintiffs in a lawsuit against the government (www.cdt.org/ciec/index.html).

We'll debate abortion rights and flat tax proposals with great fervor online, but offline? Forget it. Who goes to protests anymore?

Add to these the endlessly circulating petitions (to save PBS from budget cuts, reprimand a school board in Utah for banishing a gay/lesbian youth group, vote against a proposed Nazi newsgroup, and so on). It's not always apparent which are hoaxes. I received each of these petitions at least as many times as the GOOD TIMES virus message, and always from different sources.

Some actions are clearly legit, however. The "24 Hours in Democracy" project (www.scripting.com/24/default.html) was a beautiful pastiche of the hopes and fears of the online community.

The truth is, there's plenty of activism online. And there's always room for more. Want to do something?

- Give the government a piece of your mind. You elected them, you're entitled to send them e-mail. (A full listing of their e-mail addresses and URLs lives at www.mdle.com/WrittenWord/Interactive/. If you're not sure who your elected representatives are, find out at www.voxpop.org/zipper/.)
- What's more subversive than giving children access to information? Help wire the U.S.'s schools on October 12 (www.netday96.com) and show the kids in your community that there are a lot of different ideas in the world.
- Read Karen Coyle's list of 10 things you can do as a Cyber-Activist (www.dla.ucop.edu/~kec/deftlk.html). Choose three. Do 'em.
- Visit www.wald.com—a progressive phone service that offers news features and action items for its members and the Net community. Plenty of other progressive organizations live at www.igc.apc.org/. If you're more conservatively inclined, check out Town Hall (www.townhall.com). And if you're tired of hearing the same old solutions, you might like the New America Coalition (newamerica.org).
- Start talking! Many online journals offer discussion areas, and social/political commentary comes in all flavors on the Net. But don't just talk to like-minds. There's nothing like a debate on "enemy turf" to strengthen your own beliefs (or open up another's mind).

This medium is ripe for activism, much like college campuses were 30 years ago. So make your own revolution. Wave your own signs. And don't wait until someone else threatens your voice before using it.

☐ My cousin Ernie answers all my Internet questions.

☐ The computer guy at work answers all my Internet questions.

☐ I'd like to stop bugging Ernie and the computer guy at work with all my Internet questions.

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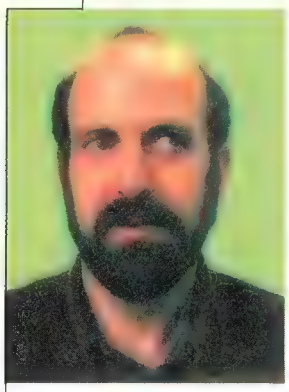
Ten Feet From the **Real Thing**

David Sobel



David Sobel (sobel@epic.org) is legal counsel to the Electronic Privacy Information Center in Washington, DC. He was only a kid when he attended Jim Morrison's trial in 1970; the photo is at http://www.epic.org/misc/squares/jim.html.

Those of us who spend our time thinking about things like free speech and privacy on the Internet sometimes lose sight of the big picture. Sure, those issues are important to the future of the net, but that really begs the question. For all the hype and hoopla, is the net itself all that important?

My thoughts turned to this question when I attended the Smithsonian Institution's 150th birthday celebration on the Mall in Washington. It was a great event, enjoyed by tens of thousands on a beautiful weekend—you can see some pictures at the Smithsonian's Web site (http://photo2.si.edu/150now/150photo.htm). It was that Web site that got me to thinking about the net. On a wonderful sunny afternoon, folks were lined up to enter a darkened tent to view an exhibit called "Smithsonian Online." Truly amazing! While standing at the epicenter of one of the world's greatest museum complexes, you could actually experience... the virtual Smithsonian! I'm generally a champion of the Web and its many wonders, but this struck me as kind of misguided. I mean, it's great that the highlights of the Smithsonian's collection can be accessed by anyone in the world, but I always assumed that the material was put online for the benefit of those who were unable to physically visit. And here we were, a stone's throw from the real thing, patiently waiting to gaze into computer screens.

The image of the darkened tent was still in my mind when the Republicans and Democrats staged their quadrennial political conventions. Much has been said about the lack of anything newsworthy at these pre-packaged, made-for-television extravaganzas. We could debate the question of whether the conventions deserved coverage by no fewer than six network and cable television outlets, but did they really warrant their very own Web sites? Anyone who wanted to follow the "action" was able to watch it on television, although the ratings suggest that viewership was historically low. So why would anyone want to sit in front of a computer and wait for graphics and audio clips to download? Maybe it was the scintillating online chat, like this snippet from the Republican site: "Gen. Powell: Hi, I'm General Colin Powell. Who is out there?" Turned out there were three people anxious to join the chat, and General Powell didn't stick around very long (http://www.convention96.rnc.org/allchat.htm#powell).

There seems to be a sense that the Internet exists, so it must be used. The result is a lot of mindless hype and a lot of content that is ill-suited for the medium.

I could cite lots of examples of contrived applications of online technology. There seems to be a sense that the Internet exists, so it must be used. The result is a lot of mindless hype and a lot of content that is ill-suited for the medium. All right, you say, so why is the net important? I think the answer is that the Internet facilitates the exchange of information that might otherwise not reach an audience. Major museums, powerful political parties and wealthy corporations have always had the means to present information to the public, but lesser organizations and most individuals have not. That's the real value of the Internet, and I realized it in an unexpected way.

Back in 1970, I attended the trial of Jim Morrison, lead singer of The Doors, who allegedly "exposed himself" during a concert in Miami. I took some photos of Morrison, who died a year later and became a rock demi-god to successive generations of fans. The photos sat in a desk drawer for 26 years, only to be pulled out on those rare occasions when my Morrison anecdote came up in conversation. When I started exploring some of the Web sites devoted to The Doors, I realized that an image from the trial would be of interest to the online community of Morrison fans. I scanned the best photo, wrote a brief explanation of its context, and created a Web page. Since posting the image, I've corresponded with Doors fans all over the world—some weren't even born when I snapped the photo. I've even been approached by the leading Doors memorabilia magazine, which requested permission to reprint the picture in an upcoming article about Morrison's trial. My Morrison Web page won't set any records for number of hits, but it allows me to share an unusual experience with anyone who might be interested in that little bit of counter-cultural history. And that, I think, is where the importance of the Internet lies. It gives each of us the ability to share our thoughts, experiences, and creativity without the need of any intermediary. It's not the mass-media potential of the net that makes it important; it's the micro-media potential.

So while it might be true that the Smithsonian is "America's attic," I've finally found a way to make a photo from my desk drawer available to the world.

☐ The Internet should be easier to access.

☐ The Internet should be easier to navigate.

☐ The Internet should be easier.

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The Dawning of Digital Dollars

Carla Sinclair

Carla Sinclair (carla@well.com) is the author of *Net Chick*, co-editor of *Happy Mutant Handbook*, and kahuna of her own zine, *bOING bOING*. Visit her Clubhouse at http://www.cyborganic.com/People/carla.

DigiCash, CyberCash, First Virtual. These are some of the leading companies competing to digitize your money, in hopes of creating a cashless society. Their names alone conjure up images of a fast, futuristic, revolutionary way of spending.

Not to be confused with credit accounts, electronic money operates much more like a debit account that offers anonymity to the buyer. According to several industry analysts, by the beginning of the next millennium digital cash could be as common as a paper bill. You won't think twice about buying a pack of gum or loaning a friend some dough electronically, via "smart cards" or encrypted money on your computer's hard drive. But I don't see how that switch-over is going to happen anytime soon when there isn't much on digital store shelves to entice us into exchanging our greenbacks for an electronic equivalent.

Until only a few days ago, I envisioned DigiCash-accepting shops on the Net to be sleek cyberstores where, with just a click of the mouse, one could purchase exotic, high-tech , or geek-chic merchandise, such as ginseng cigarettes, Hard Candy nail polish, obedient robots, or Water Joe caffeinated water. I mean, what else would you expect a merchant who deals in DigiCash to sell?

Certainly not brochures of their own company! Oh, but that's exactly what I found. I can't tell you my disappointment when I typed my way into the DigiCash Cybershop (http://www.digicash.com/shops/digi-shop.html) just to come across DigiCash's own press releases and brochures ranging from 17 cents to $1.24. Other junk they have the audacity to sell includes downloadable images of cute 'n' cuddly animals, the Golden Gate bridge, and the Great Wall of China, for one dollar each. (You can use a search engine to find many similar photos at other Websites for free.) I would do much better rummaging through the shelves of my local 99-cent store. At least there you can buy things made of real molecules, not recycled electrons.

I would do much better rummaging through the shelves of my local 99-cent store. At least there you can buy things made of real molecules, not recycled electrons.

Since I fortunately hadn't yet replaced any of my tangible bucks with DigiCash, I decided to switch my attention over to Infohaus (http://www.infohaus.com/index.html), a mall selling "information products" that accepts only electronic First Virtual dollars. At least I got a hearty chuckle out of the goods sold here: "Soft thoughts to help you through trying times in your life" for $1.50 per thought; Lucky Lottery Numbers for $3.00; and Creative Dating Tactics for $7.00. But, humor aside, they—like DigiCash—also had the nerve to sell 50-cent snapshots of their First Virtual staff field trip to San Diego's Wild Animal Park—photos which were inferior to the free images offered at the actual Wild Animal Park site (http://www.sandiegozoo.org/Wild/collection.html). I know that transforming our cash-friendly world to a wallet-less society is no small task, and that it's going to be awhile before we see worthwhile goods in shops that accept only electronic cash. At this point it would be fruitless to stock a DigiCash store with your product when almost nobody has that kind of money to spend.

And as I wait for this monetary revolution, my mind begins to question why in the hell I'd ever want to give up the silver and green that line my pockets. I like my paper bills and heavy coins. Why? Because hard cash is basically untraceable. Sure, DigiCash uses cryptography to ensure anonymity, and this makes it almost impossible to connect each financial transaction with the buyer, but where there's a hacker there's a way.

And anyway, encrypted e-cash is a moot point in the grand scheme of things. Do we really think the world's governments are going to support a cashless system that doesn't leave tracks? No way. In the extreme case, they'll be able to tax us for every purchase we make, including a 50-cent pair of shorts at a garage sale. They'll know every move we make—which bus we took in the morning, where we ate lunch, what time we purchased movie tickets to see *The Net Part Two*. I hate to always be so skeptical and cynical in this column when it comes to our individual privacy and freedom. First it was the CDA, then Webcams, and now e-money. It's not that I don't appreciate the technology and its potentials—I think e-cash is fascinating on its own merit. But we have to approach these digital transformations with extreme caution. Yes, it would be exciting to purchase a Betsey Johnson dress with just a swipe of a stored-value card or a few taps on my keyboard, but while we wait for e-money merchants to begin offering products that we would actually want to buy, let's carefully consider what we stand to lose in the bargain.

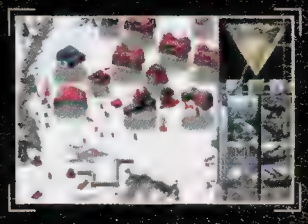
WORLD WIDE WARFARE

COMMAND & CONQUER RED ALERT

Take on players from around the globe with Head-to-Head Internet play!

The explosive new strategy game from the creators of million-seller Command & Conquer. Play solo or go head-to-head on the Internet to fight for global dominance.

With Super VGA graphics and more than 40 missions, players fight over land, sea and air. Thirty new units and structures to choose from including MIGS, spies, destroyers, submarines and more. Surrender is not an option.



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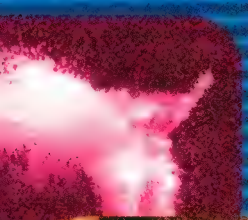
The Most Amazing, Shocking, Spectacular VIDEOS Lurking on the Internet

By Jon Phillips



Forget Shockwave. Forget Java. Forget GIF89a. If you want to view truly realistic, dynamic content on the Internet, you'll need to download video files. We know what you're thinking: Video takes forever. True enough, but new technologies can ease the pain, and many clips are worth the wait. Indeed, during the construction of this feature, work flow at *The Net* constantly ground to a halt as staff members gathered around a central computer to view what the browser dragged in. Seems no one can resist Michael Jordan dunking a basketball, or Robert DeNiro saying, "You talkin' to me?"

Submitted for your approval: megabyte after megabyte of some of the best video the Internet has to offer. We've also gathered together a comprehensive package to help you find, view, and post video on your own. For information on where to go for the best video clearinghouses, see page 24. For the skinny on all the popular digital video formats, see page 26. For tips on how to search for specific video clips, see page 28. Also on page 28, we introduce you to time-saving streamed video, and on page 30 we provide a primer on what it takes to post video on your own Web site. Throughout this feature, we present our favorite video clips broken down by category.

As an added bonus, we've packed this month's CD with video so you don't have to wait.

Lights, camera, action.

cinema

Pulp Fiction Trailer

pulpfi01.mov, 2.2MB
http://www.miramax.com/media/clips/mov/pulpfi01.mov

Most film trailers give too much away. But when you're looking for cult film footage, trailers tend to wrap up the best scenes in a nice, tidy package. The trailer for *Pulp Fiction* is a prime example.

Taxi Driver: "You Talkin' to Me?"

TAXIDR.MOV, 1.4MB
http://www.voyagerco.com/CC/mov/TAXIDR.MOV

"You talkin' to me? You talkin' to me? You talkin' to me? Then who the hell else are you talking to? Are you talkin' to me? Well, I'm the only one here. Who the f-- do you think you're talkin' to? Oh yeah? Oh yeah? Okay." DeNiro. *Taxi Driver*. And then he pulls the gun.

Jason and the Argonauts Skeleton Fight

JASON.MOV, 2.4MB
http://www.voyagerco.com/CC/mov/JASON.MOV

Man, those skeletons are wispy creatures. As such, their arms and legs tend to break off quite easily. So what makes them brave enough to take on a team of angry Greek sailors? *They're skeletons*–they're already dead!

Reservoir Dogs: Like a Virgin

reserv01.avi, 1.8MB
http://www.miramax.com/media/clips/avi/reserv01.avi

Look and listen as Quentin Tarantino and crew inelegantly discuss a woman's chastity and lack thereof.

Psycho Shower Scene

douche6.avi, 2.9MB
http://hitchcock.alienor.fr:80/video/psychose/douche6.avi

Just what is the proper way to mimic the sound that occurs when Anthony Perkins stabs Janet Leigh? And how do you spell it? Around *The Net* office, we just raise our hands in a hacking motion and shriek like pigs.

This Is Spinal Tap: Lick My Love Pump

STLUVPUM.MOV, 1.5MB
http://www.voyagerco.com/CC/mov/STLUVPUM.MOV

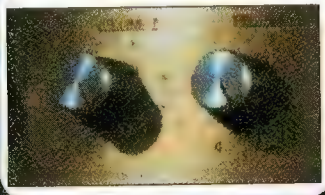
Listen as David St. Hubbins plays a heavy metal melody inspired by Bach and Mozart. Hey, Marty DeBergi liked it. Described it as "beautiful," in fact.

history

This Is Spinal Tap: 11

g11.mov, 2.3MB
http://www.voyagerco.com/spinaltap/g11.mov

Nigel's amp goes up to 11. Why not simply make 10 the loudest setting? Nigel's amp goes up to 11.



Five Easy Pieces: Chicken Sandwich

5EASYP.MOV, 5.6MB
http://www.voyagerco.com/CC/mov/5EASYP.MOV

Who can forget Jack Nicholson's 1970 performance as a toast-wanting, waitress-hating, chicken sandwich-ordering malcontent? Check this clip out for a primer on proper table-clearing etiquette.

Pulp Fiction Outtake

pulpfi04.avi, 2.5MB
http://www.miramax.com:80/media/clips/avi/pulpfi04.avi

In a slice of film that didn't make the final cut, Uma Thurman interrogates John Travolta before their date at Jack Rabbit Slim's. Guess what: John looks gorked.

Quayle/Bentsen Debate

NOJFK-020196.avi, 1.5MB
http://www.electionline.com/EL/1996/02/NOJFK-020196.avi

Lloyd Bentsen to his green grocer: "I serve artichokes. I know artichokes. Artichokes are friends of mine. Sir, these are no artichokes." No, that's another video. This one is all about Dan Quayle being a poor substitute for Jack Kennedy.

Elvis in the Army

MDE-10-16.mov, 1.3MB
http://www.footage.net/OnDemand/archivefi/storage/MDE-10-16.mov

Let's go back to the days of yesteryear when a celebrity would actually serve in the military. Here we find newsreel footage of Elvis Presley getting measured for a uniform. You won't see any gyrating hips, but you will see a bare-chested King.

Federal Building Implosion

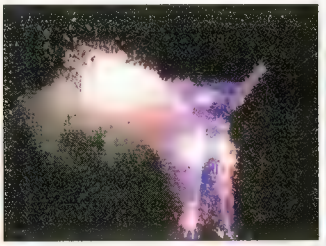
implosion.mov, 1MB
http://www.cnn.com/US/OKC/reporters/lefevre/implosion.mov

The Oklahoma City Federal Building is razed, leaving the nation only to deal with Timothy McVeigh and a lot of bad memories.

Burning Man 1995

burning_man.mov, 2MB
http://www.cnn.com/US/burning_man/burning_man.mov

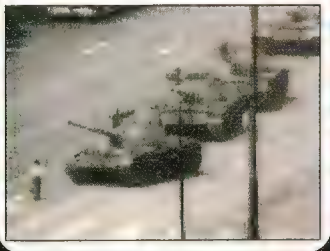
SEE the flaming pyre! HEAR the tribal chanting! SMELL the hippies' patchouli oil! Once every summer, hundreds of people gather in Nevada's Black Rock Desert to flambé a skyscraper-tall, man-shaped wooden structure. Check out the documentary evidence.



Tiananmen Square

square.mov, 1MB
http://www.footage.net/OnDemand/cablenews/storage/square.mov

One stalwart student against an army of tanks. Hmm, seems like a fair fight. This is what happens to disobedient citizens in a non-democratic society.



O. J. Simpson Verdict

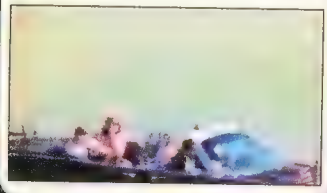
vedict.mov, 1.9MB
http://www.cnn.com/US/OJ/daily/9510/10-04/movies/verdict.mov

Dig The Juice as he hears the verdict that set him free. Can a man's facial expressions belie guilt or innocence? You're the armchair psychoanalyst; you be the judge.

Abe Zapruder's JFK Assassination Film

zap200.avi, 3.28MB
http://www.informatik.unirostock.de/~impetus/Kennedy/Photos/zap200.avi

Here's the film that conspiracy theorists have replayed time and time again in search of clues on the assassination of President Kennedy. For this amazing piece of evidence, we can thank Abe Zapruder, who just happened to be filming the Kennedy motorcade when the shots rang out. Just how telling is the footage? Well, it doesn't take a forensics expert to see Kennedy's head explode somewhere around the 16th second of this 26-second clip.



Break Dancing

bgals1.mov, 2.2MB
http://weber.u.washington.edu/~general/videos/bgals1.mov

Now, for the first time: Documentary evidence that a fad known as "break dancing" did in fact occur in the early 1980s. Here's a clip from Malcolm McLaren's "Buffalo Gals" video.

Pearl Harbor Report

Pearl_Harbour.mov, 3.3MB
http://192.253.114.31/D-Day/News_reels/Movies/Pearl_Harbour.mov

This newsreel footage shows some of the aftermath of the attack on Pearl Harbor. A day that will "live in infamy," and a day captured for posterity.

Oklahoma City Bombing

okc.mov, 1.3MB
http://www.footage.net/OnDemand/grinbergf/storage/okc.mov

A helicopter shot shows the aftermath of the Oklahoma City Federal Building bombing moments after the tragic event occurred. The tale is in the tape.

music

Butthole Surfers: "Pepper"

pepper.mov, 2.3MB
http://here.mtv.com/video/clips/b/butthole.surfers/pepper.mov

Why is the woman scraping a trout? Why are riot police dancing like go-go girls? Don't ask so many questions: *They're the Butthole Surfers.*

Les Claypool Drumming

Les-Drums.qt, 1.5MB
http://www.addict.com/ATN/video/Primus/Les-Drums.qt

Les Claypool, he of Primus fame, is one bad-ass bass player. A damn fine drummer, too. Check him out getting funky in the studio.

Beastie Boys: "Sure Shot" Live

SNLSure1.mov, 5.7MB
http://www.southern.com/beastieboys/Movies/SNLSure1.mov

Here's the whole first half of "Sure Shot" as performed by the Beasties on "Saturday Night Live." The second half of the song is available too, in a separate file. Question: Does the hip-hop term "shoot the gif" have anything to do with image files?

A Hard Day's Night Intro

AHDN.mov, 1.7MB
http://www.voyagerco.com/CC/mov/AHDN.MOV

Here's the movie that captured Beatlemania as it unfolded. With scene after scene of the Beatles just doing their thing, *A Hard Day's Night* portrays the lovable mop-tops with a tinge of documentary flavor.

Oasis: "Don't Look Back in Anger"

dontlookback.mov, 2MB
http://here.mtv.com/video/clips/o/oasis/dontlookback.mov

They look like the Beatles. They sound like the Beatles. But they're not the Beatles. They're Oasis, and they're four very angry young men—don't let the video tell you otherwise.

LL Cool J: "Loungin"

loungin.mov, 2.2MB
http://here.mtv.com/video/clips/l/ll.cool.j/loungin.mov

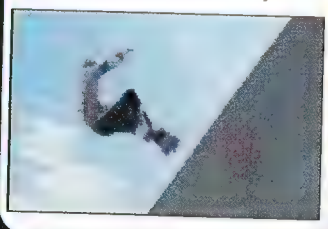
Sure, you can call LL a commercial success, but he's no crossover sell-out. Lady's love him; fellas respect him. That's a winning formula in the rap game.

sports

Tony Hawk Getting Air

VERTSKBD.MOV, 864KB
http://espn.sportszone.com/editors/media/video/VERTSKBD.MOV

Before he "retired," Tony Hawk was considered to be the best ramp skater in the world. Judge for yourself. In this clip, he catches major air.



Bike Jump

0630BIK2.MOV, 1.3MB
http://ESPNET.SportsZone.com/editors/media/video/xgames/0630BIK2.MOV

What the hell is a "no-foot can-can"? Check out this video for a quick demo. One thing's for sure: It requires a bike, and it doesn't look safe.

Michael Jordan Dunk-Layup

1991.avi, 706KB
http://www.nba.com/finals96/Theater/video/finals/1991.avi

This is *the* shot—the shot color commentators use to demonstrate that Michael Jordan can do anything he wants to do on the basketball court. It's Game Two of the 1991 NBA Finals between the Bulls and the Lakers. Jordan goes up for a right-handed dunk, shifts the ball to his left hand in mid-air, and then juggles in a layup. Why did he forego the easy two for a riskier shot? Perhaps he was just getting bored.

Kerri Strugg Vault

0723KS.AVI, 975KB
http://fly.hiwaay.net/~cterry/0723KS.AVI

Watch Kerri Strugg as she vaults into history, clinching a team gold medal for the United States women's gymnastics squad. And all on a bum ankle. That's commitment, folks.

Street Luge Crash

0624LUG1.MOV, 1MB
http://ESPNET.SportsZone.com/editors/media/video/xgames/0624LUG1.MOV

Street luging: It appears to be a cross between skateboarding and traditional ice luging. Watch two dudes jockey for position, and then nearly careen out of control.

The Best Video Clearinghouses

CNN Video Vault
http://www.cnn.com/video vault/index.html
The Cable News Network posts numerous journalistic clips dating from July 1995 to the present.

Criterion Collection
http://www.voyagerco.com/criterion.cgi
This videodisc company posts clips of all its classic and cult releases.

Footage.net
http://www.footage.net/
This site provides direct links to a number of documentary film archives, each containing numerous sample clips.

Home Vision
http://www.homevisioncinema.com/homevision/homevision_byclips.html
This vendor of classic movies on videocassette also posts a suite of clips.

Jesse's Movies
http://www.uslink.net/~edgerton/index.html
Jesse is a Good Samaritan who decided to pull together links to all his favorite clips on a single Web site. You'll find sports, movie, TV, and pop music footage.

Jurassic Punk
http://www.geocities.com/Hollywood/3957/main.html
Offers more than 2430 megs of video clips from more than 160 movies.

NBA.COM
http://www.nba.com
This is the place to go for scores of video clips on the most graceful of team sports.

Sportszone
http://www.sportszone.com/
ESPN's Web site contains a bounty of sports clips. You'll find footage of all the Major League team sports, as well as clips of such "extreme games" as barefoot water skiing and bungee jumping.

Un-Cabaret
http://www.uncabaret.com/video.html
Here you'll find clips of popular comedians.

Video Links
http://members.aol.com/videolinks/index.html
Another kind soul has posted links to hundreds of great video clips. You'll find music, TV, movies, and politics.

Warner Bros. TV Vault
http://www.tv.warnerbros.com/virtual-lot/bin/vaults.htm
Warner Bros. was cool enough to post scads of clips of "Friends," "ER," and "Lois & Clark."

Yahoo!
http://www.yahoo.com/search.html
Type in "video clips" and Yahoo! will return a qualified list of clips running the entire gamut of entertainment options.

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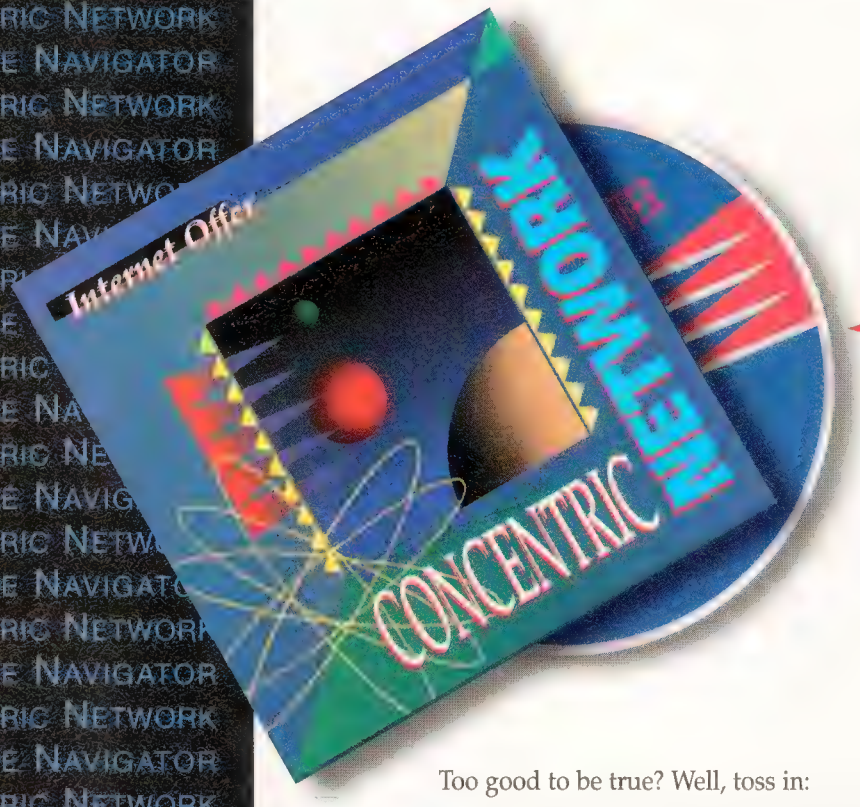

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humor/ bizzare

Drunken Woman Arrest

drunk1.mov, 196KB
http://www.tvcops.com/TooHot/index.html

Bad boys, bad boys. Whatcha gonna do when they come for you? Bad boys, bad boys. Oh, those crazy TV cops. Check out Smokey as he questions a drunken woman with a clothing deficit.

Trooper Hit and Run

troophit.mov, 384KB
http://www.cnn.com/US/9604/23/newsbriefs/troophit.mov

This one is for all you cop-haters out there. See the state trooper get whacked by a hit-and-run pick-up truck. What's that object that went flying? The pick-up's side mirror?

Teenager Assaults

video_vandals2.mov, 864KB
http://www.cnn.com/US/9603/video_vandals/video_vandals.mov

What's happening with the youth of today? Now, street punks are filming their random acts of violence. Eerie, unnerving, frightening. The soundtrack is particularly scary.

Foreign Itchy and Scratchy

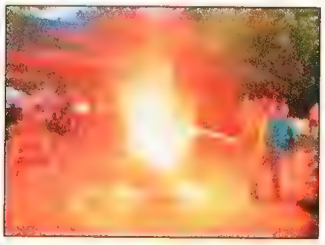
worker.qt, 2.4MB
http://deathstar.rutgers.edu/people/bochkay/movies/worker.qt

Here's a foreign interpretation of the Itchy and Scratchy myth. Are they speaking German or Russian?

Lighting a BBQ With Liquid Oxygen

grillX.mov, 19.3MB
http://ghg.ecn.purdue.edu/grillX.mov

That George Goble is one nutty cue-meister. Seems regular-old charcoal lighter isn't flammable enough for old Georgy. Nope, he just has to use liquid oxygen—and a large inferno it does indeed create. Hey, where did that grill go? It's ashes, Einstein!



Kids in the Hall/ Head Crushing

head.mov, 1.3MB
http://www.comcentral.com/mac/kith/head.mov

Watch a Canadian dude as he fends off a vicious head-crushing. Not as gory as it sounds; you'll understand when you see the video.

The Low-Down on Video Formats

Three video technologies have entrenched themselves on the Web: QuickTime, AVI, and MPEG. While other technologies may emerge and promise superiority over these file types, it's best to stay away from posting them on your Web site if you're trying to reach a broad audience. Here's the skinny on the popular triumvirate.

QuickTime

QuickTime is the audio/video file format and multimedia architecture developed by Apple in 1991. It can be used on Macintosh, PowerPC, and IBM-compatible computers. The advantage of working with QuickTime is that you'll be able to store, edit, and playback movies and sound files without any specialized hardware on Macintosh and Windows computers. When compressed, QuickTime retains better image quality than MPEG and AVI, but creates substantially larger files. Two suffixes can be used when posting QuickTime movie files: .mov and .qt. If you're working on a Mac, and want to convert your files to AVI, there's a great shareware tool available called Video for Windows Utilities for Macintosh. This little package is very useful, and comes in handy for projects of any scope.

AVI

Short for Audio/Video Interleaved, AVI is the file type used by Video for Windows, the multimedia architecture developed for the Windows 95 operating system. Interleaving is the process of combining audio and video signals into a single signal. Unlike QuickTime, AVI is not a cross-platform file type: it requires special playback tools on anything other than a Windows machine. Like QuickTime, AVI retains image quality better than MPEG when compressed, but by interleaving the audio and video, AVI files tend to be lower in resolution than QuickTime. The advantage to working with AVI is that it compresses a little more effectively than QuickTime. The proper suffix for posting is .avi.

MPEG

MPEG is short for Moving Pictures Expert Group, an organization dedicated to defining compression techniques and standards for moving pictures and audio. MPEG is both a cross-platform file type, as well as a codec (compression/decompression standard) that can be used on QuickTime and AVI files. For playback, MPEG requires special decoding software, and, depending on image size, hardware. Compression-wise, MPEG offers more bang for the buck. As stated above, MPEG file sizes will be considerably smaller than QuickTime and AVI files, but image quality will be compromised. The proper suffixes for posting MPEG files to the Web are .mpeg, .mpg, and .mpe.

-David Pearce

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Zest Karaoke

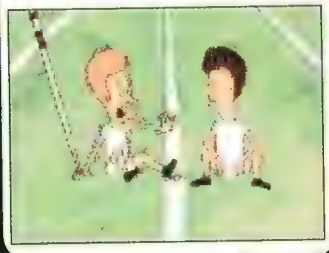
Karaoke.qt, 2.8MB
http://crl.nmsu.edu/~iverson/QT/karaoke.qt

He looks like a Mafiosi, sounds like Larry Bud Melman, and sings the commercial jingle for Zest soap. Is it a scene from a new David Lynch movie? Nope. It's real, people—it's real.

Beavis Gets Stuck by a Javelin

javelin.mov, 1.6MB
http://www.mtv.com/animation/beavbutt/beavvideo.html

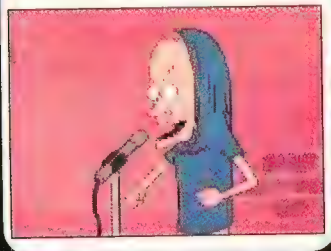
OK, they may be sophomoric, but Beavis and Butt-head are capable of reducing *The Net* editorial staff to tears. In this clip, Beavis gets nailed by a javelin. Notice the squishy sound his hand makes when he attempts to wriggle free.



Beavis as Beatnik

crapachi.mov, 1MB
http://here.mtv.com/video/animation/beavbutt/crapachi.mov

Boy, boy, crazy boy—be cooly cool boy. In this clip, Beavis gets cool like a beat poet and drops some spoken word at the local java source: "I am Cornholio. I need TP for my bunghole. Give me all your crapachino!" Brilliant.



Streamed Video Is the Future

Multi-megabyte video files won't be so scary once Webmasters get with the streamed video program. Streamed video, you ask? It's video that plays almost immediately after you click on a hyperlink–you don't have to wait for the entire file to download before enjoying the show.

Two companies are currently leading the streamed video revolution.

Iterated Systems (http://www.iterated.com) offers two products–ClearVideo and ClearFusion–that promise to rewrite the rules of how we view video on the Web. ClearVideo is a compression technology that works within both QuickTime and AVI files to distill film clips into remarkably small yet high-quality chunks. ClearFusion streams these chunks so you can view them while they download. There's only one hitch: Webmasters must begin using Iterated's technology in order for you to enjoy its riches. Visit the company's Web site to download the ClearFusion plug-in and check out the sample files. As long as you have enough RAM to head off those pesky "low-memory" messages, you'll be shocked by what you experience.

VDO (http://www.vdo.net) has developed VDOLive, a streaming technology that is already appearing on several high-profile Web sites. VDOLive requires special server software on the Web site's end, and either a helper app or plug-in on the surfer's end. Visit the company's Web site to download all the necessary software. You'll also find links to everything from streamed news reports, care of CBS, to videos of "fitness center-folds" from the Michael Scott Modeling Agency. Hubba-hubba.

Finding Video Online

In this story, we call out some of the best video on the Internet. There's a lot more to find, however. In order to root out the last bit, you'll need to use a search engine. DEC's AltaVista (http://www.altavista.digital.com) is unsurpassed for locating pages that contain particular HTML references. For example, AltaVista enables you to search pages for particular types of images (for example, JPEG or GIF), or where the pages link to, or even the name of a Java applet that the page calls.

To use AltaVista to find video, you must have two things: first, knowledge that most video on the Internet is stored in files that have an extension of .mov, and, second, a lot of patience. The first enables you to run the search. The second enables you to deal with the load of bogus results the search will return.

Go to AltaVista, and use its link keyword, +link:.mov, to find video. You'll get something like 40,000 pages. Some of them don't include movies. Why? Dunno: It's just one of the oddities of AltaVista. That makes it a good idea to narrow your search further with other keywords. For example, if you're looking for video of President Kennedy, enter: +link:.mov AND Kennedy

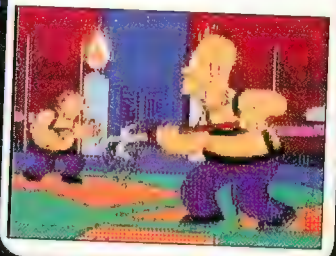
Learn more about AltaVista's powerful searching functions by clicking the Help button–this is one Help button that truly does make a world of difference.

–John Montgomery

Homer Simpson "Star Trek" Scene

quatloos.qt, 1MB
http://deathstar.rutgers.edu/people/bochkay/movies/quatloos.qt

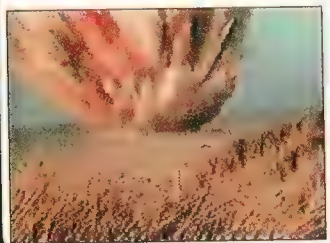
Hey, "Star Trek" fans: Remember that scene from "Amok Time" in which Kirk and Spock battle each other with those hokey garden spades? Well, here's the same scene poured through the filter of "The Simpsons."



Exploding Whale

whale.qt, 11MB
http://www.xmission.com/~grue/whale/whale.qt

OK, so this dead whale washed up on an Oregon beach. The authorities decided to blow it up with dynamite, and let seagulls take care of the blubber chunks. Oops, the plan went awry. Here's the local news report.



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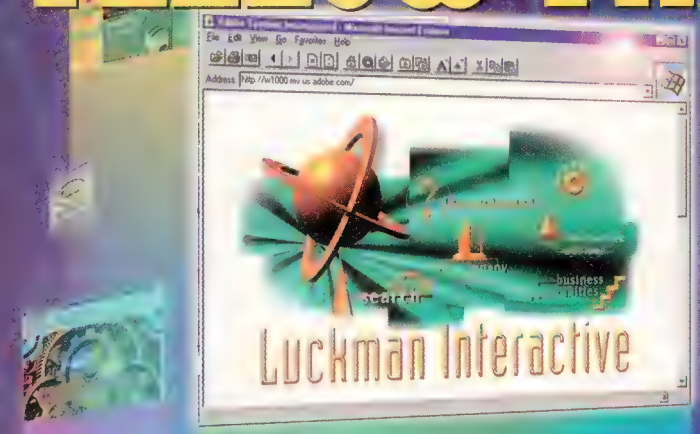

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How to Digitize Video and Post It on Your Web Site

by David Pearce

Nothing beats video files when it comes to adding a touch of "documentary evidence" to a Web site. From choosing the right camera to tagging the right HTML, here's all you need to know before embarking on your own Internet video production project.

Shooting for Capture

"Garbage in, garbage out" is a maxim frequently repeated in video circles. In simple terms, it means that quality video clips can come only from quality stock—and quality stock requires the right camera for the scope of your ambitions. If you're looking for something at the consumer level, check out the JVC Compact VHS Recorder ($499) and the Sony Handycam line ($499–$699). If you have money to burn, you might consider the JVC GR-DV1 Cybercam ($1849), the Canon L2 Hi-8 Camcorder ($1899 and up), and the Panasonic AG-EZ1 ($2995 and up).

The more expensive cameras straddle that fine line between consumer and professional quality, and often offer built-in editing and titling functions. Since you'll be executing these functions later on your computer, you might do well to avoid the more expensive toys.

Regardless of which camera you purchase, make sure it supports Super-VHS and comes with RCA jacks. Most video capture boards, which we'll be looking at in a moment, support these two specifications. Super-VHS is an enhanced format that offers higher resolution than the standard video tape used by most VCRs. RCA jacks are sometimes called "composite" or "phono" jacks.

Quiet on the Set!

Technology aside, it doesn't hurt to know a thing or two about cinematography. Follow these tips to ensure your clips are presentable.

- Avoid quick camera motions. They don't translate well when video is edited and compressed.
- Avoid shooting into bright light. It will wash out your content, and make it look grainy and yucky.
- Avoid shooting in low light. It will blur the details of your content—and make it look grainy and yucky.
- Always shoot more footage than you think you'll need. Tape is cheap, but set-up and shooting time aren't.
- Shoot a lot of close-ups. They retain their definition at small image sizes and high compression rates.
- Avoid effects that are built into the camera. It's always better to add gimmicks with video editing software, especially since built-in effects tend to be cheesy.

Congratulations! You are now a graduate of *The Net* Film School. Put your diploma on the wall (you can get a copy from http://www.thenet-usa.com/diploma.html), and prepare to use some computer tools. You'll need three components to prepare your video for posting: a video capture board, video editing software, and a fast hard disk.

Capture Boards

A video capture board is required to import video onto your hard disk. This board interprets videotape signals as digital information, and writes the data to your disk. Many video capture boards digitize 16-bit stereo synchronous audio (sound that plays in sync with video), but this adds to their cost.

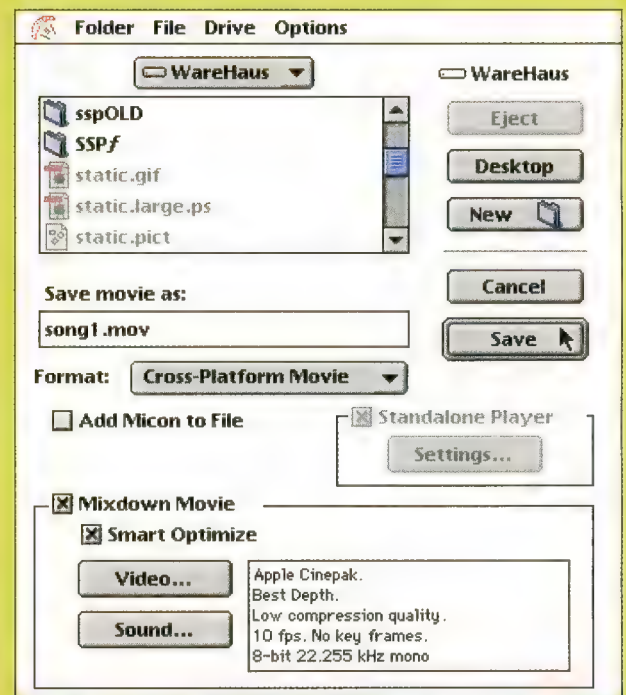
When choosing a video capture board, you can follow one of two routes: You can go with an AV (audio/video) computer, which comes with built-in audio and video capturing capabilities, or purchase a third-party board that meets your personal needs and budget.

With the growing popularity of desktop multimedia, computer manufacturers are beginning to offer integrated systems that are far cheaper than they used to be. Macs overwhelmingly dominate out-of-the-box video capture. The Macintosh 8500 PowerPC has excellent built-in video input/output capabilities, and the 7600 series comes equipped with video input ports, but lacks output ports. Both models support Super-VHS and RCA inputs, and come prepackaged with Avid VideoShop software.

Mac clones can be custom-ordered to include video capabilities. PowerComputing can give you a good price on the Miro video capture board, which is discussed at right. Call 800-999-7279 for price quotes on the system of your choice.

If you're one of the many computer owners that doesn't own an AV Mac, you'll need to find the right add-on capture board—consumer-level PCs tend not to ship with video capture support. Check out any bargain PC catalog, and you'll find a variety of board options; many beat retail prices, and come bundled with editing software packages. Below are some good capture boards that run less than $1000.

- Bravado1000 by Truevision, $899 for Mac and PC, includes Adobe Premiere 4.2 software.
- Miro DC20 by Miro, $790 for Mac and PC, includes Adobe Premiere 4.2 and 16-bit sync audio.
- FPS60 by Fast, $499 for PC, includes Adobe Premiere 4.0 and XingMPEG encoder software.



Avid's VideoShop editing software for Mac. Notice the status box at the bottom right: it provides an immediate report on the quality settings you've selected.

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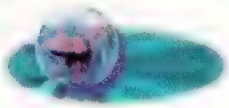

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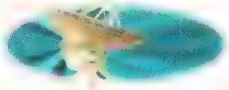

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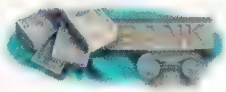
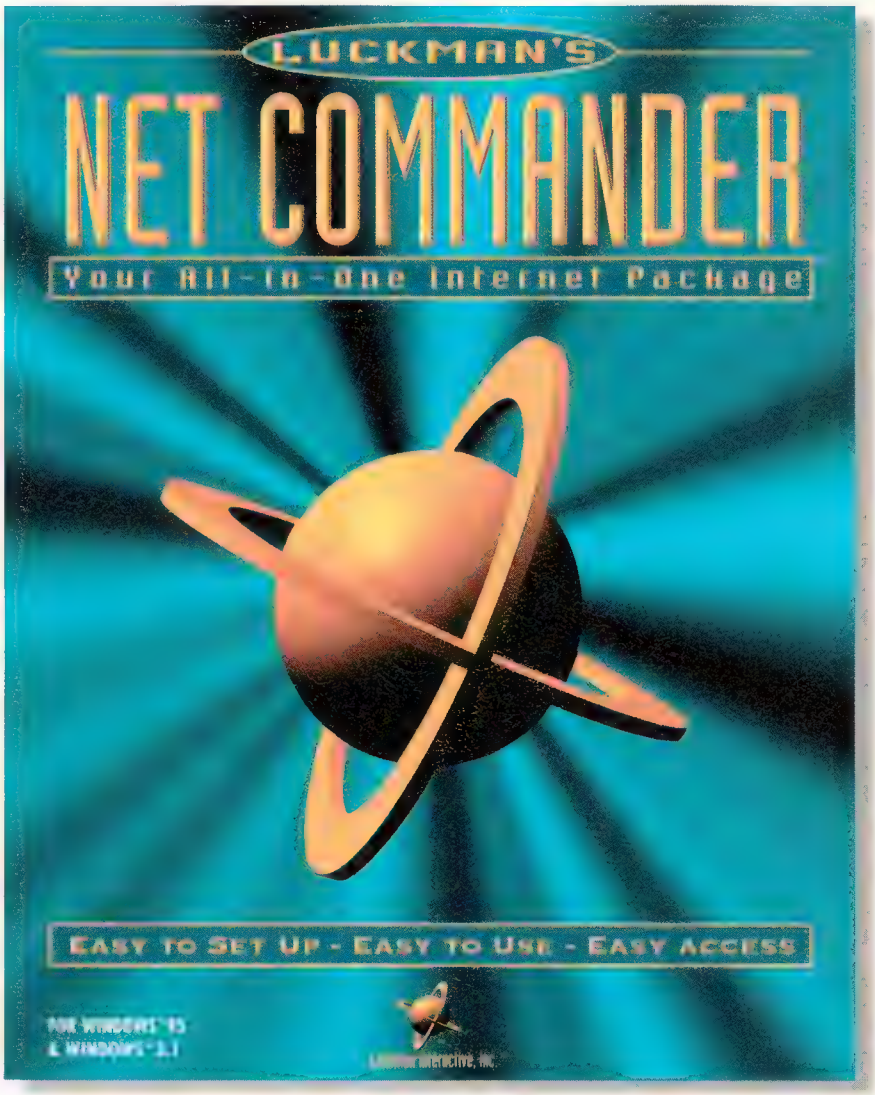


Document Readers

References

Utilities

Auto Account Registration



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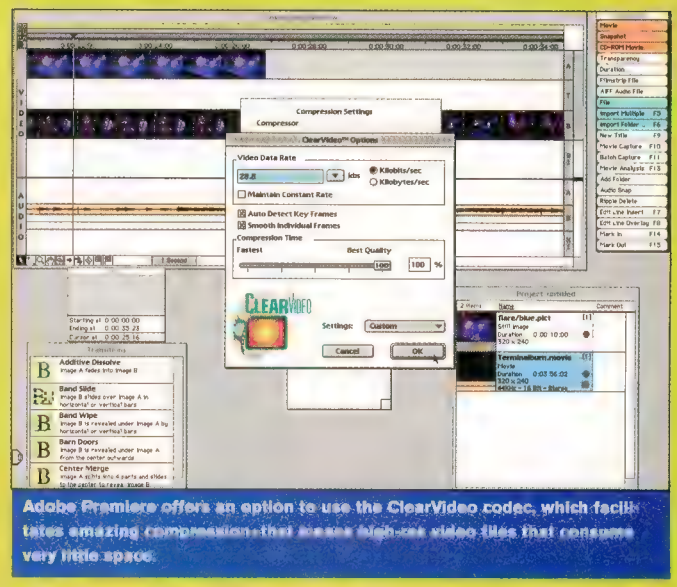
Editing Software

Video editing software packages come in a variety of flavors, but most of them allow you to tweak the same types of controls to determine the quality of your clip. As you edit your raw footage, you'll encounter the following variables.

- The size of your video's window. This is defined by width and height, in pixels. For example, 160 x 120, 320 x 240, and 640 x 480.
- Your video's color count. For example, 256 colors (8 bit), thousands of colors (16 bit), and millions of colors (24 bit). Anything less than 16-bit color will look spotty.
- Your video's frame rate. This is defined by frames per second (fps); in other words, the number of frames that pass through the video's viewing window each second. High frame rates provide realistic motion, but create large file sizes; low frames rates mean choppy motion, but files sizes are smaller. Frame rates vary from 1 to 30 fps.
- Your video's compression standard. You'll want to compress your video clips to make them small enough for downloading on the Internet. Different compression standards are referred to as "codecs" (an abbreviation for "compression/decompression"). The most common codecs are Radius Cinepak, Intel Indeo, JPEG, and MPEG. Cinepak, which is included in both the QuickTime and AVI video formats, attains high compression rates, good image quality, and fast playback, making it one of the most commonly used codecs for Web video.



Adobe Premiere offers an option to use the ClearVideo codec, which facilitates amazing compression that creates high-res video files that consume very little space.

Different video editing software packages offer different levels of editing control. One of the following packages should satisfy your particular demands.

- Premiere 4.2 by Adobe Systems, $550 for Mac, $580 for Windows. A great tool that has too many handy little functions upon which to elaborate.
- VideoShop by Avid, $330 for Mac. Similar to Premiere, and has a nice function that allows you to make a clip PC-compatible before you create a final copy.
- Media Studio Pro 2.5 by Ulead Systems, $349 for Windows. A good package for beginners, but lacks the complete editing functions of Premiere.

Hard Disks

Your final toolbox consideration concerns your hard disk, specifically its capacity and seek time.

First, you'll want a disk with a lot of storage capacity. Compressed video consumes a lot of space when compared to compressed image files, and uncompressed video is just plain gluttonous. Here's an actual case for reference. I recently digitized a five-minute independent film for a San Francisco-based photography and film Web site. The first incarnation of the video started at 160 x 120 pixels, 24-bit color, and 30 fps. It's file size was 160 MB. I later edited down the clip to one minute, and compressed it using the Cinepak codec to 16-bit color and a frame rate of 8 fps. The resulting clip was 1.7 MB.

While files sizes less than 2 MB are a whole lot better than files size more than 160 MB, they do tend to add up quickly during the throes of video production.

Translation: Get a whooping big disk.

Seek time is the time it takes to open and/or save files, and is measured in milliseconds. For video production, you'll want a hard disk that has an average seek time of 8 ms or less. (Imagine how long it takes to open a 2 MB image file. Now imagine how long it would take to open a 160 MB video file. Get the picture?)

If you plan on digitizing large clips, you might want to consider a fast-and-wide SCSI adapter card, such as the ATTO Silicon Express (NuBus/$519, PCI/$599), or FWB's SCSI JackHammer ($499). These cards allow high-volume transfer for smoother playback and capture.

Universal Strategies

Here are two essential tips that apply to all digital video projects intended for the Web.

1. Whenever you work with video, you need to be conscious of the image degradation that occurs with each reprocessing of the clip. Your final clip should be no more than three generations removed from its original source:

- First generation: You shoot the video.
- Second generation: You capture the video on your hard disk.
- Third generation: You edit and compress your video for posting on the Web.

A resolution comparison. The clip on the left was processed using millions of colors at High Quality; the clip on the right was processed using thousands of colors at Low Quality. Note the artifacts (video noise) and pixilization of the image on the right.

2. Keep file sizes small. Viewing windows should be limited to 160 x 120 pixels, unless resizing is offered by special viewing software, as is the case with Iterated's ClearVideo. Unless you're using a streaming technology that can handle high frame rates, aim for 1 to 8 fps. This sounds low, but consider your audience's bandwidth limitations. Use Radius' Cinepak compression, and play with the Quality setting to find a happy medium between file size and video quality. Whatever you do, don't re-compress a previously compressed file—it will look terrible and play poorly.

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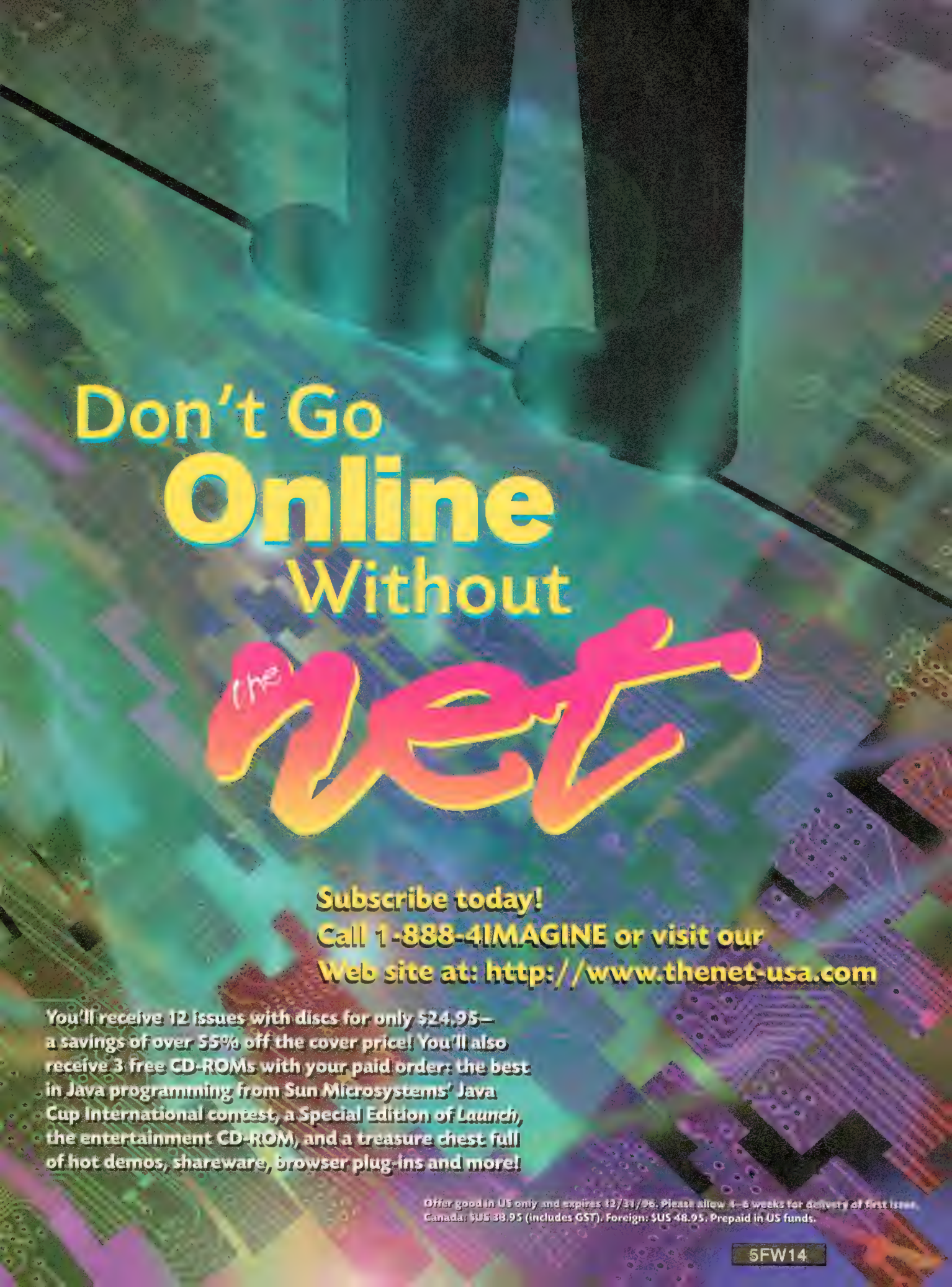
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Post Your Clip or Use the <Embed> Tag—You're It!

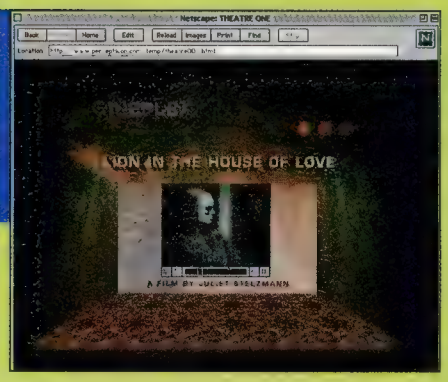
OK, it's finally time to make your video public. First, you'll want to call your ISP to find out which video MIME types are supported in subscriber Web pages. If you're posting QuickTime, be sure to ask if both QuickTime suffixes—.mov and .qt—are supported, and if not, which one is.

Most Web-based video can be placed and accessed via the <A HREF> anchor or the EMBED tag. The proper use of <A HREF> is as follows:

<A HREF="/movies/dad.avi"> [click here] </A>

Of course, besides merely coding the correct HTML, you'll also need to put your video file in the appropriate folder.

For streaming video, you'll want to use the EMBED tag, which is very similar to the IMG tag. Be sure to partition other streaming media, such as RealAudio, onto other pages: All streamed media compete for the same bandwidth, and too many streams can crash your page.



Embedded QuickTime at Perceptícon (http://www.perceptícon.com). Note the quality of the video image and the clip's integration with a well-designed background.

The Artistic Equalizer

Bandwidth constraints have turned the Web into a true artistic equalizer—there's no reason why a professionally produced, 1 MB video clip should look any better than your modest home project. So before bandwidth technology catches up to high-end video production, experiment with the tools and techniques mentioned in this article, and find creative solutions to get the most out of small file sizes. It's a tired cliché, but necessity is in indeed the mother of invention.

David Pearce works at The Netizen, a HotWired channel, and is a freelance writer for Ziff-Davis books.

What You'll Need to View Video

Different browsers require different software add-ons to display video. For the most part, the 3.0 versions of Netscape Navigator and Microsoft Internet Explorer offer inline video support, while earlier versions require helper apps and plug-ins.

MovieStar plug-in (http://www.beingthere.com/moviestar/plugins/)
MacZilla plug-in (http://maczilla.com/)
QuickTime for Windows helper app (http://quicktime.apple.com/qt/sw/sw.html)
Sparkle helper app (ftp://ftp.the.net/mirrors/ftp.utexas.edu/graphics/sparkle-245-fat.hqx)
CineWeb plug-in (http://www.digigami.com/CineWebPress.html)
ClearFusion plug-in (http://www.iterated.com/ClearFusion/)
AVI for Windows helper app (http://www.icgroup.net/files/vfw11d.exe)
InterVu MPEG plug-in (http://www.intervu.com/pavillion/product.html)
MPEG for Windows helper app (http://www.icgroup.net/files/mpegw32h.zip)

	QuickTime Support	AVI	MPEG
Navigator 3.0 for Windows	Apple QuickTime plug-in (inline)	LiveVideo plug-in (in-line)	CineWeb plug-in or InterVu MPEG plug-in
Navigator 3.0 for Mac	Apple QuickTime plug-in (inline)	MacZilla plug-in	InterVu MPEG plug-in or MacZilla plug-in
Navigator 2.0 for Windows	CineWeb plug-in or MovieStar plug-in	CineWeb plug-in or ClearFusion plug-in	CineWeb plug-in or InterVu MPEG plug-in
Navigator 2.0 for Mac	MovieStar plug-in or Maczilla plug-in	Maczilla plug-in	InterVu MPEG plug-in or MacZilla plug-in
Navigator 1.1 for Windows	QuickTime for Windows helper app	AVI for Windows helper app	MPEG for Windows helper app
Navigator 1.1 for Mac	Sparkle helper app	AVI for QuickTime helper app	Sparkle helper app
Internet Explorer 3.0 (available only for Windows)	Apple QuickTime plug-in (inline)	Inline Windows support	Inline Windows support

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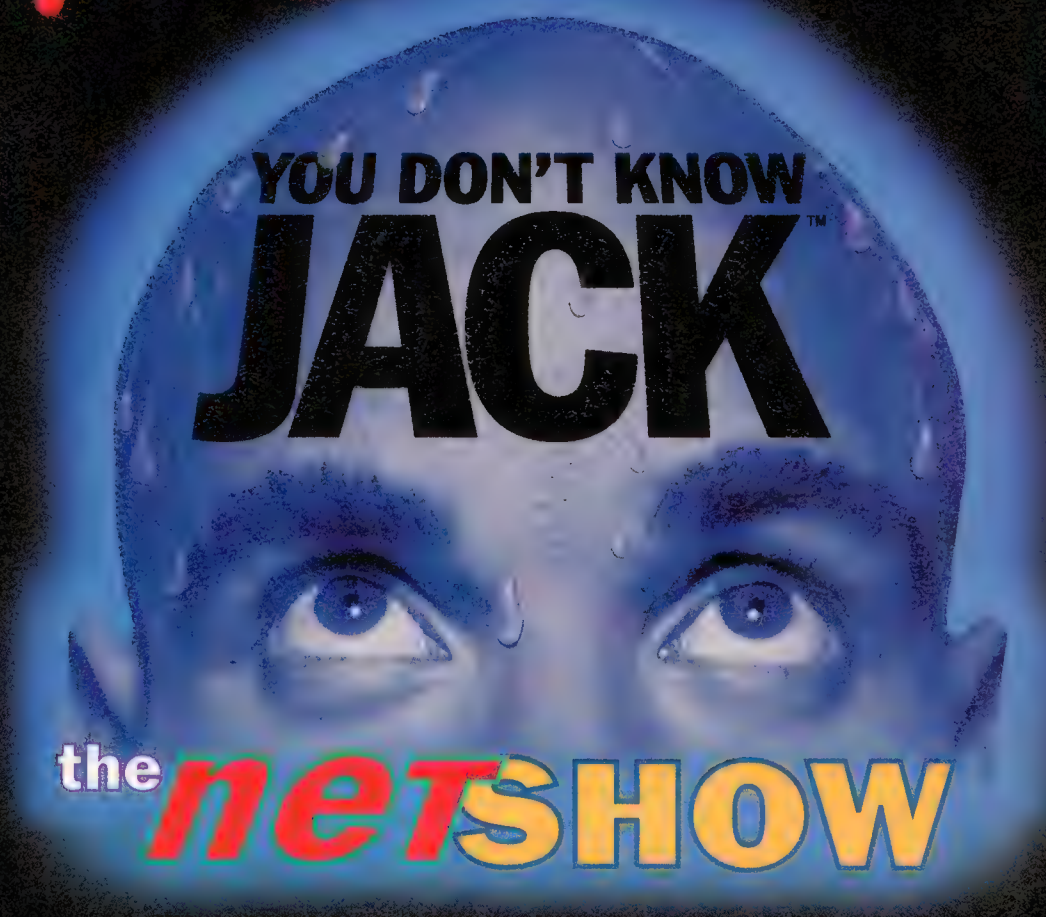

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Faster!

How to Beat the Bandwidth Blues

You want your bandwidth, and you want it now. Your 28.8 Kbps modem has been performing with all the vigor of The Little Engine That Could, but you're still not getting transfer rates acceptable for multi-megabyte downloads. Fear not, intrepid cybernaut, for a variety of technologies can help you beat the bandwidth blues. Some exist in real-space, while others are still vaporware waiting to condense. Read on as we investigate ways to raise your Internet speed limit.

by Kevin Savetz

33.6 Kbps Modems

Speed: 28 Kbps–33.6 Kbps
Cost: free (with a software upgrade)–$250
Availability: excellent

The least-expensive option for breaking the 28.8 Kbps barrier is a 33.6 Kbps modem, which can, in theory, send and receive data 16 percent faster than its slower cousin.

How It Works

A 33.6 Kbps modem works almost exactly like a 28.8 Kbps modem: It converts digital data to an analog signal for transmission across a phone line. On the receiving end, another modem translates the analog signal back to digital bits; 33.6 Kbps modems simply use a slightly faster transmission protocol to get the job done.

Unlike most of the other technologies listed in this article, a 33.6 Kbps modem will work with the same phone cords, wall jacks, and underground copper wires that slower modems use. This means you can use the same phone line you're already using for telephone calls.

Caveats

In reality, the 16 percent speed increase from 28.8 Kbps to 33.6 Kbps is negligible. Although this speed boost is better than a sharp stick in the eye, it doesn't feel that much faster than 28.8 Kbps when you're online. What's more, the jump to 33.6 Kbps isn't commensurate with speed increases that the modem industry has already mustered: The jump from 9600 bits per second modems to 14.4 Kbps modems represented a 50 percent speed increase, and the jump from 14.4 Kbps to 28.8 Kbps represented a 100 percent increase. By comparison, a 16 percent increase seems almost silly.

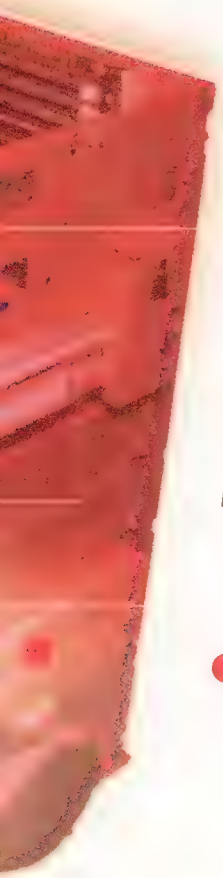
Have you ever noticed that your 28.8 Kbps modem doesn't always connect at top speed, even when connecting to a comparable modem? This may be due to noise on your phone line, and the faster your modem communicates, the less tolerance it has for noise. Your phone line simply may not be able to eke out a reliable 33.6 Kbps connection. Phone conversations disrupted by static, and modem connections plagued by unexpected disconnects suggest noisy lines. A final concern: Modem manufacturers, in their rush to offer the fastest boxes as quickly as possible, have released their 33.6 Kbps modems without any support for a 33.6 Kbps transfer rate standard, which at press time was still being determined. It's therefore possible that modems from different manufacturers may not communicate with each other properly above speeds of 28.8 Kbps. So, if you're buying a new 33.6 Kbps modem, make sure you can upgrade it (preferably through flash ROM) to the new 33.6 Kbps standard once it's approved.

How to Get It

To get cruising at this speed, all you'll need is–surprise!–a 33.6 Kbps modem. Make sure your ISP offers 33.6 Kbps access, and if so, what brand of modem it uses. Ideally, you and your ISP should use the same brand.

How Much It Costs

If you already have a 28.8 Kbps modem, you may be able to upgrade your modem



Kevin Savetz (savetz@northcoast.com, http://www.northcoast.com/savetz/) is one of the authors of MBONE: Multicasting Tomorrow's Internet. *His glove compartment is stuffed with Internet speeding tickets.*

to 33.6 Kbps at little or no cost. Just contact your modem's manufacturer to determine if you can download a flash ROM upgrade from its FTP site, or order a replacement chip to do the upgrade yourself. Upgrading with flash ROM is simple: You merely run a special program that updates the modem's internal software. A chip upgrade involves opening your modem's chassis and manually replacing a part. This may sound scary, but actually requires little effort.

If the modem manufacturer says your model really does max out at 28.8 Kbps, it may still give you a discount on a new box. Supra (**http://www.supra.com/**), for example, will replace a 28.8 Kbps modem with a faster one for about $75.

Modems slower than 28.8 Kbps cannot be upgraded to 33.6 Kbps. So, if you're currently moving at 14.4 Kbps, you might as well leapfrog over to 33.6 Kbps. A new 33.6 Kbps modem, such as the U.S. Robotics Sportster (**http://www.usr.com/**), will cost around $250. ISPs generally do not charge extra for 33.6 Kbps access.

ISDN

Speed: 64 Kbps–128 Kbps
Cost: $300–$1000 for hardware, plus $25–$35 for monthly fees
Availability: good

ISDN stands for Integrated Service Digital Network—that's tech-speak for "way fast phone lines." This technology can offer access speeds of up to 128 Kbps. That's 4.5 times the speed of that ever-lagging 28.8 Kbps modem.

How It Works

To surf the Internet via ISDN, you'll need to mothball your old analog modem, and instead go with an "ISDN router." This router works much like a modem, in that it transfers data between your computer and your ISP. However, unlike a typical modem, ISDN sends and receives digital signals, eschewing the lethargic process of analog wave conversion altogether.

ISDN runs over the phone wires already installed at your home or office, but your phone company must first switch these wires for digital service. This requires two operations: extensive testing and "conditioning" of the wires to make sure they can carry a signal that's clear enough for digital data, and installation of special jacks for ISDN compatibility. A single ISDN connection can, with certain hardware configurations, support up to eight different communication devices.

Caveats

ISDN is a very real technology, but it may not be available to you if your telephone company or ISP isn't yet with the program. And even if your phone company does offer access, you won't be able to get ISDN if your particular phone line is located too far away from the phone company's switching equipment. You may also find that you need a new phone and answering machine—analog phones and answering machines won't work with ISDN outlets unless you run them through special adaptors.

If you have the choice, try to buy the same brand of router that your ISP uses. This isn't essential, but if you're both using the same hardware, you may be able to utilize compression features, which pack more data onto the line, providing an effective throughput faster than 128 Kbps. This works well with easily compressed data like text, but does little good with data that is already compressed, like .GIF and .ZIP files. When push comes to shove, using the same hardware may be impossible: Many ISPs have industrial-strength ISDN routers that don't come in consumer versions.

Finally, some people are wary of investing in ISDN, because it may be leapfrogged by faster technologies such as ADSL and cable modems, which are reviewed on page 38. This remains to be seen, but the fact is that ISDN is a reliable, widely available tool, while other technologies are either not ready for prime time, or are too expensive for home consumers and small businesses.

How to Get It

Both ISPs and phone companies are now acting as one-stop ISDN services. If you establish service via an ISP, it will recommend or sell you a router, and help you deal with your telephone company to make sure you have the proper phone connections. You can also go straight to the phone company for similar services, but you may not receive all the Internet support to which you've grown accustomed via your ISP. The bottom line: By hook or by crook, you'll need an ISDN router and digital phone line.

How Much It Costs

ISDN can be expensive, but not prohibitively so. The cost depends on three variables: the price of your ISDN router, your ISP's fee, and your telephone company's fee. A router that can connect a single computer to the Internet will cost from $300 to $500; one that can connect a small LAN will cost about $1000.

Query various ISPs about their ISDN rates, which can range from $25 a month for all-you-can-eat access to $5 an hour for pay-as-you-go access. The industry simply hasn't settled on a common price range for ISDN. You'll need to call your local telephone company about its fees—every telco has its own idea of what ISDN is worth. Pacific Bell charges about $35 per month for a digital phone line, plus a penny a minute when you're connected during business hours.

Bits, Bytes, and Baud: What the Heck Is the Difference?

Bit: The smallest amount of data you're likely to deal with, a bit is basically a binary 0 or 1. Each character you see on your screen needs eight bits in order to be displayed. Modem speeds are typically measured in thousands of bits per second, for example, 28,800 bits per second. Most often, you'll see bits grouped into thousands (kilobits or Kb) or millions (megabits or Mb). You probably have either a 14.4 Kbps (kilobit per second) modem or a 28.8 Kbps modem. Notice the capitalization in "Kb" and "Mb." This will be important when you turn the page.

continued

Byte: One byte equals eight bits. Each character you see on your screen requires one byte in order to be displayed. RAM and disk capacities are measured in bytes, or, more typically, in thousands of bytes (kilobytes or KB) or millions of bytes (megabytes or MB). Here's where people get a bit—pun only slightly intended—confused, because the abbreviations are only one capitalization apart: little b for bit, versus big B for byte.

Baud: This is the winner for most misused term. Baud is not the same as bits per second, although you'll hear nearly everyone use it that way. Technically, it's a measure of how fast a modem "signals"—how many data bursts a modem sends every second. Why isn't that the same as bits per second? Because every burst can contain several bits, so a 2400 baud modem can actually be sending data at 14,400 bits per second: Each signal just contains 6 bits. Don't press people too hard on this one—it'll make their heads explode. In fact, play it safe: Don't use this term. Use bits per second instead.

ADSL

Speed: 64 Kbps–4 Mbps
Cost: $500–$2000 for hardware, plus $50 for monthly fees
Availability: very bad, but expected to improve

ADSL stands for Asymmetric Digital Subscriber Line, an emerging technology that is getting a lot of press—and hype. When receiving data, ADSL is anywhere from 52 to 139 times faster than a 28.8 Kbps modem. ADSL is much slower when sending data, moving at 2 to 17 times the speed of a 28.8 Kbps modem.

How It Works

ADSL is the phone company's answer to cable modems. It provides ultra-fast data transfers, and is being pitted against cable modems as the solution to bust average consumers' bandwidth blues. Depending on the type of ADSL system used, the technology can transfer data downstream (to the user) at 1.5 to 4 Mbps, and upstream (from the user) at 64 to 500 Kbps. Because of its lopsided transmission rates, ADSL may be an excellent choice for those who need to receive a lot of data, but not send huge amounts. This means it wouldn't be practical to run a popular Web site over ADSL.

ADSL works over existing phone wires, and like ISDN, requires special consumer hardware, an ISP that can feed you data, and a special connection to the phone company. There are an estimated 560 million copper telephone wires installed around the globe, but traditional phone service uses only 1 percent of the bandwidth that these wires can hold. ADSL leverages the remaining 99 percent by using a different form of modulation to squeeze more information through the copper wires than is possible with standard voice calls and analog modems.

Caveats

ADSL has promise, and although you may be ready for it despite its high startup cost, ADSL is not ready for you. ADSL won't disappear into the vapor, but it will be a few more months, maybe a year, before it congeals into services and products that you can really use.

How to Get It

Here's the problem: Unless you're lucky enough to live in one of the few areas where phone companies are conducting ADSL trials, you and your community will have to wait your turn. The telcos backing ADSL say the technology will be available in some cities by the end of the year, or early 1997—optimistic projections for a solution that's still in its early testing stages. GTE (http://www.gte.com/) is conducting the industry's first ADSL trial in the Dallas/Fort Worth area. The company has also announced trial service in Redmond, WA, home of Microsoft. Pacific Bell has announced an ADSL trial in San Ramon, CA. Other phone companies are following: Bell Atlantic, BellSouth, SBC Communications, and US West have also announced ADSL trials. Metropolitan centers will be the first to enjoy these bold experiments.

How Much It Costs

Prices for ADSL routers will range from $500 to $2000 depending on speed and configuration. Installation of an ADSL line could also be a major hurdle, at an estimated $3000. All of this hardware is currently in short supply, so prices should drop dramatically in a few months as ADSL becomes more common.

The monthly service fee from your phone company will be low—likely a flat a fee less than $50. Costs incurred by ISPs will likely be much higher: Some ISPs have only a T1 (1.54 Mbps) bandwidth pipe to share among all their analog modem customers, so they'll need to invest big bucks to upgrade their capacity. Indeed, ISPs may stay out of ADSL altogether, leaving it up to the phone companies to provide Internet access in addition to the line itself. Once again, the lines between ISPs and telcos are blurring (see "How Your Data Snakes Across the Internet," September 1996).

Cable Modems

Speed: Up to 10 Mbps
Cost: around $300 for hardware, plus $30 for monthly fees
Availability: very bad, but expected to improve

If you have cable television, you're already downloading hundreds of thousands of megabits of data every second in the form of television signals. Wouldn't it be nice to harness some of that bandwidth to access the Internet? Cable modems can theoretically deliver Internet data at up to 350 times the speed of a 28.8 Kbps modem.

How It Works

In order to provide Internet access via the same high-bandwidth wires on which your television signals travel, your cable company allocates a portion of its cable signal (enough to carry a TV channel or two) to Internet data packets.

Packets traveling downstream from the Internet to your home are actually sent to all subscribers in your immediate area. Your cable modem, however, retrieves only packets intended for your unique address. This scenario differs from the cable TV model, in which TV signals can be retrieved and viewed by any subscriber who is tuned to a particular channel. Data packets traveling from your computer to the Internet follow a different model, which we describe under "Caveats"(below).

Cable modems can provide speeds of up to 10 Mbps for downstream access—that's the fastest bandwidth we've mentioned so far. Depending on the equipment you use, you'll be able to hook a cable modem to either a computer or a TV set, which would require Web surfing via a special remote control.

Caveats

Unlike ADSL, ISDN, and analog modem technology, cable Internet access is a shared resource: You don't get 10 Mbps to yourself. In fact, you share it with cable customers on several nearby blocks. If every cable customer logs onto the Internet at once—not likely—your access speed will slow to a crawl. And if you're the only one online—again, not likely—you get all the bandwidth to yourself. For most uses, 10 Mbps is more than enough to share with a few neighbors.

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Sending data over cable isn't as easy as receiving it. Upstream data tends to attenuate as it travels to the cable company, getting lost under the stronger downstream television signals. Some companies believe they can deal with the problem by offering slower upstream access, as is the case with ADSL. Other companies will skirt the issue by offering a hybrid system: Incoming data will arrive via cable, but outgoing data will travel on your phone line via a traditional modem built into the cable box. For Web browsing and newsreading, this situation would work nicely, although it would tie up your phone while you're online. Finally, cable modems are currently vaporware.

How to Get It

If you're interested in this wonderful new technology, call your cable company, and say, "I want cable access to the Internet." Then hold your breath for a long, long time. Although some cable companies are further along than others, none are yet offering Internet access to everyone who can get HBO and MTV.

Cable Internet access is currently being spearheaded by two companies. Time Warner Cable (**http://www.twmaine.com/**) is test-marketing in Akron and Canton, OH, serving 300,000 customers at $39.95 a month. @Home (**http://www.home.net/**), has been preparing to test-market in Fremont, CA, since the beginning of the year. If all goes well, Time Warner Cable will later open up shop in Portland, ME, Binghamton, NY, and San Diego, and @Home will move on to wire Sunnyvale, CA, Arlington Heights, IL, and Hartford, CT.

It's too early to offer specific tips on how to establish access, but rest assured, when cable modems come to your town, you'll be hearing about it.

How Much It Costs

Industry executives expect that cable modems will cost around $300. It's probable that when your cable company offers Internet access, it will rent the modem to you, or even loan it to you for free. The cost of Internet service is up to the cable company—expect no more than $40 a month for unlimited access. Since the cable company will provide the Internet feed, there will be no need for a separate ISP.

Predicting the Bandwidth Breakthrough

What technology will emerge as the leading bandwidth solution, and when can home consumers expect to reap its benefits? Five Internet opinion leaders make the call.

Avram Miller
Vice President of Business Development, Intel (http://www.intel.com)
"I don't think there will be a single solution. I think the two leading solutions will be cable modems and ADSL. My guess is that it will be evenly divided between the two. Twenty to 30 percent of the PC homes in the United States will have broadband capability by the end of the decade, by the combination of those two. I think satellite technology will play an important role in the U.S. but because of its late start, it won't play a dominant role."

Robert Metcalfe
Executive Correspondent, *Infoworld*, and Vice President of Technology, International Data Group
"The important thing about cable modems, ADSL, ISDN, etc., is not technological, but that competition be unleashed among them and other technologies, which means we have to demonopolize telecommunications. Allowing telcos to buy one another, and to buy cable companies, is not what we need, and should be stopped. ISDN is our best short-term solution beyond 28.8, and look how the telco monopolies have botched that for the last 20 years."

David Hakala
Editor, *Boardwatch*, a trade magazine for ISPs and Internet developers
"Cable, 18 months. Reason one: It's going to be the fastest solution of the ones currently proposed. Two: Cable companies very badly want a piece of the Internet action. Three: They're more competent than the RBOCs [regional phone companies]. ADSL still isn't anywhere, and 33.6 doesn't work over normal phone lines—you get a 16 percent increase about 10 percent of the time."

Mike O'Dell
Vice President and Chief Scientist, UUNET Technologies, Inc. (http://www.uu.net), one of the world's largest ISPs
"There probably won't be just one solution, assuming there are any. It's not at all clear that 'fast connections' will ever be 'cheap connections,' at least not in the way many folks are dreaming about. Does the phrase, 'Power too cheap to meter' ring a bell? How about 'Free, unlimited bandwidth'?"

Bill Gram-Reefer
***MicroTimes* columnist**
"ISDN is DOA. Pac Bell's plan is to use cable modems where its fiber backbone is installed, and ADSL modems over copper in other areas until the fiber shows up. It will be mix-and-match to get the job done, although ADSL has an advantage until cable companies get more two-way cable installed."

Fractional T-1, T-1, and T-3

Speed: 56 Kbps-44.7 Mbps
Cost: around $1,000 for set-ups, plus at least $700 for monthly fees
Availability: good

If you're ready for a full-time connection that can send and receive data at a fast clip, you may opt for a fractional T-1, full T-1, or T-3 Internet connection. A full T-1 line offers 1.544 Mbps, more than 50 times the speed of a 28.8 Kbps modem. T-3 will give you a blistering 44.7 Mbps—28 times faster than a T-1. A fractional T-1 is a slice of a T-1 that can deliver from 56 Kbps to the top speed of 1.544 Mbps.

How It Works

T-1s and T-3s are very fast, dedicated circuits that move information between two points. They are useful for companies that need to have 24-hour, high-bandwidth Internet access for multiple employees. These lines require special equipment, including a costly Internet router.

Caveats

High-speed, dedicated access is expensive and complicated to set up and maintain, but it is a proven technology. If you need to run your own Internet server, this is the way to go.

How to Get It

Your phone company currently provides T-1 and T-3 service, and many ISPs provide dedicated Internet feeds. You will probably need an experienced consultant to help you sort out the hardware choices.

How Much It Costs

Once again, costs vary depending on your phone company, ISP, and bandwidth needs. A T-1 line from Pacific Bell costs about $1000 to set up, plus around $700 a month for service. T3 lines are generally the domain of ISPs—only ISPs really need them, and only ISPs can really afford them.

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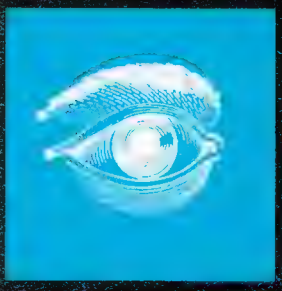

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HTML EDITORS BARE ALL

Tired of Coding HTML? Let a WYSIWYG Editor Do the Grunt Work

By Neil Randall

Imagine this: You decide to take on MicroBill by introducing a brand new word processor. You put in gazoodles of features, tune it up so it runs faster than Word (OK, not a major feat), then proudly release it to market. The only thing your program doesn't have is a WYSIWYG display—that what-you-see-is-what-you-get look that makes italics look like italics and all other graphical elements look the way they should. Instead, you ask your customers to type in a special code when they want italics, another code when they want tables or columns, another code when they want colored fonts, and so on. On the packaging, you tell them it's better that way, because they'll have absolute control over everything they do.

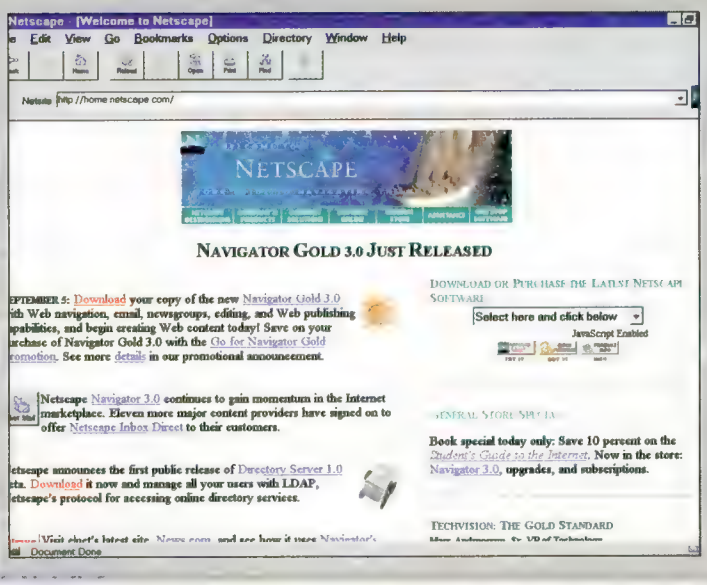
Sounds stupid, right? Of course it's stupid. These days, nobody would dream of releasing a word processor without WYSIWYG. Old WordPerfect junkies might still want their Reveal Codes, and older WordStar nostalgiasts their dot commands, but the remaining millions of us want our word processors to show formatting on-screen, not just on paper.

So why is it, then, that people who design Web pages are asked to type in `<h3>`all kinds`</h3>` of barely intelligible `<b>`codes`</b>` that would make any word processor user see `<FONT COLOR="#FF0000">`red`</FONT>`?`<p>` The answer, of course, is that there hasn't been much choice. You do HTML, you do codes.

Until now, that is. WYSIWYG HTML editors have hit the screen running. Not that there's any shortage of non-WYSIWYG HTML editors. Programs like HotDog, WebEdit, HTML Assistant, and gobs of others have been around for many moons. But the actual here's-what-it's-gonna-look-like-on-the-Web editors are a recent phenomenon. We'll take a brief look at four of them: Microsoft FrontPage (Windows), Netscape Navigator Gold (Windows, Mac, UNIX), AOL's AOLPress (Windows, Mac, UNIX), and Adobe PageMill 2.0 beta (Mac and Windows).

So how did we test them? We grabbed the Netscape home page by using the Edit feature in Navigator Gold, which saves both HTML and graphics to disk, then loaded these files into the editors to see how faithfully each rendered the task at hand. As you'll see from our screen shots, no two products rendered the code as it originally appeared—not even NavGold, which is stymied by a modest features set. Read on as we throw the gauntlet further, and challenge the editors to prove their speed and useability claims. Hey `<i>`somebody`</i>` has to.

Below is Netscape's home page as of Sept. 5. Notice the image map (the wide Netscape graphic on top), the two-column table that runs down the page, and the graphics with staggered alignments. Check out screen shots deeper in this article to see how these elements are interpreted by various WYSIWYG HTML editors.


Netscape - [Welcome to Netscape]
File Edit View Go Bookmarks Options Directory Window Help
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Neil Randall is the author of eight books about the Internet, including* Special Edition Using Microsoft FrontPage, Guide to Netscape Navigator Gold, *and* Using HTML. *His upcoming* The Soul of the Internet *covers the history of the Net through interviews with key players.

Microsoft FrontPage 1.1/2.0 [Windows 95/NT]

http://www.microsoft.com/frontpage

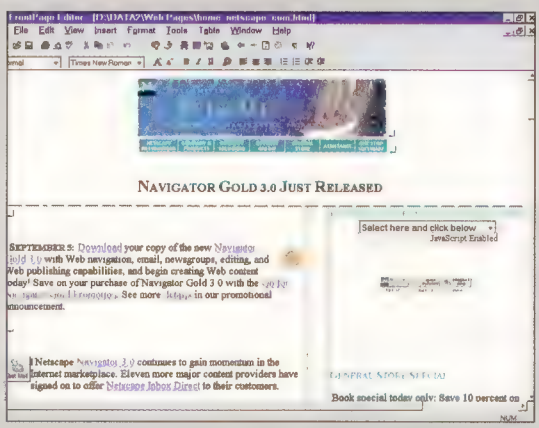
$149, $40 rebate for Office users

If you're not averse to using Microsoft products, dive on this baby. If Microsoft leaves you cold or sick, you should still give it a look. FrontPage is a full Web creation and administration tool, and a much-pumped-up version 2.0 promises to cover the stuff that was left out of 1.1. If you were waiting for a single program to lead Web building out of the ASCII dark ages, this one—in part because of the Microsoft marketing juggernaut—might very well be the one.

FrontPage comes with several integrated tools. FrontPage Editor is a fully WYSIWYG product that lets you design an HTML page almost as if you were in a word processor or desktop publishing package. FrontPage Explorer (not to be confused with Windows Explorer) allows you to see a visual representation of your Web site, and to perform all Web administration duties. You also get a Web server, one that wouldn't do for a site of any size online, but which lets you build Web pages locally for later upload to a public server.

One of FrontPage's major pluses is its ability to eliminate some Web programming. You can create forms that actually work without the agony of figuring out CGI scripting. FrontPage accomplishes this by installing special extensions on the Web server software, which means that you have to have cooperation from your ISP before these techniques can work. With 2.0, you'll also be able to bring ActiveX, VBScript, Java, and JavaScript elements easily into the document, and strong database connectivity will be built right in. Integration with MS Office, especially the upcoming Office 97, is stellar.

But what about the WYSIWYG display itself? Looks fine. Text, colors, pictures, alignments, forms, tables, Frames: They're all there, and all instantly visible. Most Netscape extensions are supported, as are Internet Explorer extensions (as you'd expect). In 1.1, bringing unsupported HTML into a page is a bit of a pain, but once again 2.0 promises to help this along. Don't look for cascading style sheets, though; even though Internet Explorer supports them, FrontPage doesn't, neither 1.1 nor 2.0.



The document in FrontPage 2.0. The image map is displayed properly, and can be edited. The form and table are also displayed properly, although slightly out of alignment with the original.

Microsoft FrontPage 1.1/2.0: The most complete single package available, with WYSIWG editing, site management tools, and Web server built in. Version 2.0 will include a full-featured image editor as well. Excellent at creating sites from scratch; removes tedium and difficulty of some forms programming. Some difficulty importing existing documents. ISP must agree to mount FrontPage extensions on its server.

Netscape Navigator Gold [Macintosh, Windows 95/NT, UNIX]

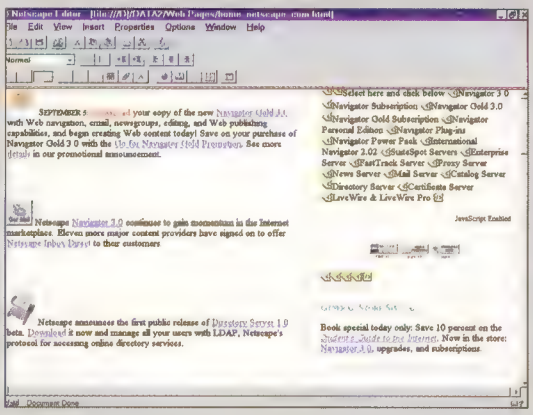
http://home.netscape.com/comprod/products/navigator/gold/index.html, $96

If Gold had held to its initial promise, it would have been the most important WYSIWYG HTML tool on the market. But it didn't, not by a long shot. What we have, instead, is an excellent program for creating basic HTML up to and including graphics and tables. Everything else—Frames and forms in particular—have to be brought in from outside, as does anything else that goes beyond the capabilities of, say, Navigator 2.0.

These disappointments aside, NavGold rocks when it comes to quickly putting together Web pages. The idea is a great one. Instead of authoring a page, and then previewing it in Navigator, you write the thing directly in a browser window, so you can immediately tell what it'll look like out on the Web. In fact, the reverse is true as well. If you see a page you like, click the Edit button, and NavGold will transfer it to your hard drive, change all the links to match the new location, and let you alter the thing to your heart's content. It's the quickest possible route to good design: Copy someone else's. If you prefer, Netscape offers a series of online wizards and templates to get you going.

NavGold offers excellent control of font sizes and colors, including the ability to assign JavaScript properties to individual characters. You can put graphics on the page and align them as you wish, and you can easily build both internal and external hyperlinks. Building a table is a matter of filling out a dialog box that covers cell padding, table width, caption placement, and so on. As a matter of fact, most of what you do in NavGold is handled through the dialog boxes and the (somewhat cluttered) toolbar. Pretty much defines easy.

But it's limited. No font faces, no style sheets, no image maps (!), no forms (!), no Frames (!), no background sounds, no multi-column support, and on it goes. The greatest disappointment is that the display capabilities of Navigator keeps leaping so far ahead of NavGold that the latter has become useful only as a beginner's tool.



The lower portion of the Netscape home page as rendered by NavGold. The table is displayed correctly, but the graphic buttons are not properly aligned. The yellow pentangles indicate unrecognized HTML.

Netscape Navigator Gold 3.0: The full Navigator browser plus an editor that lets you write Web pages directly inside the familiar Netscape window. Shows you immediately what your pages will look like in Netscape. Very strong publishing/uploading module, and good document import. Limited HTML capabilities, and trouble handling some code imports (Frames, for example). Downloadable for trial basis.

Adobe PageMill 2.0: Superb WYSIWYG editor, with full features and advanced HTML built in. Best choice for professional Web developers using Macintosh, partly due to strong tech support. Excellent use of Mac interface, and superlative drag and drop characteristics. A few importing difficulties, and needs faster upgrades to accommodate new HTML extensions.

Adobe PageMill 2.0 [Macintosh, Windows 95/NT]

http://www.adobe.com/proindex/pagemill $99

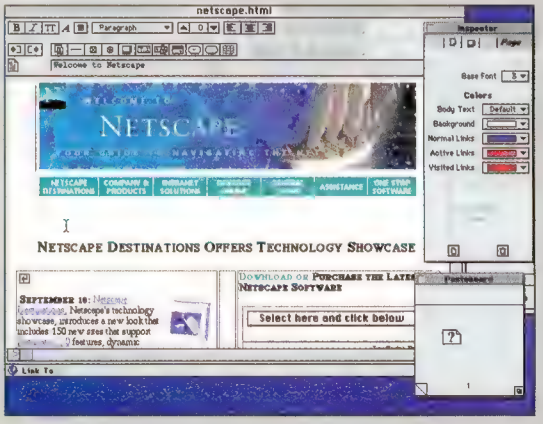
PageMill has been the favorite HTML editor among Mac users for quite a while, and by the time you read this, it will be available for Win95 junkies as well. On its own, PageMill offers tons of advanced formatting features. Combined with SiteMill (a separate and more expensive package), the program shines as a full-featured Web management tool à la FrontPage. Good stuff. Very good, in fact.

Mac owners constantly insist that the Mac's interface is still friendlier than Windows by a long shot, and PageMill won't prove them wrong. You can create entire pages by simply dragging and dropping, then letting PageMill convert everything to HTML on the fly. This applies to graphics, URLs, and even form elements. Want a radio button somewhere on your form? No sweat—just drag one in from the toolbar.

PageMill gives you support for plug-ins, such as ShockWave files, QuickTime movies, Acrobat docs, and more. You can toss in some animated GIFs, flow your text around the graphics, import Excel spreadsheets directly, and create Frames, all in a WYSIWYG fashion. You can also insert objects, such as multimedia files, scripts, or applets, even if they're not directly on your machine. For those with serious Web sites that require importing homemade code from other sources, PageMill offers a placeholder to make sure the code stays intact. The program also gives you an estimate of how long the page you're creating will take to download via modem.

If you're the resident Web Slave at your company, you'll want to upgrade to Adobe SiteMill, which includes all of PageMill, and gives you some solid Web management tools as well. SiteMill's Site View gives you a visual display of your Web, automatically updating links if you move pages among folders. It also does a diagnostic on your entire site to find errors in hyperlinks.

PageMill does a great job of faithfully rendering the Netscape home page. Users will appreciate the program's floating control palettes.



AOLPress 1.2: It's free, so there's no excuse not to try it. Editor and browser fully integrated. Strong table and image map creation tools. MiniWeb view offers a simple but powerful site management environment. Customizable toolbar is helpful right from the start. Problems with importing unknown HTML extensions (multi-column, etc.) and number of windows becomes unwieldy at times.

AOLPress 1.2 [Macintosh, Windows 95/NT, Unix]

http://www.aolpress.com Free

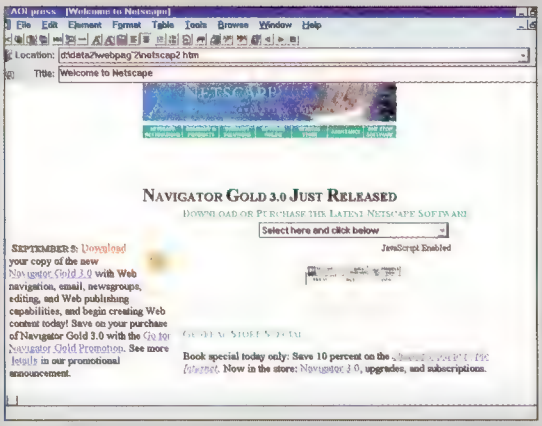
It used to be NaviPress, then GNNPress, and now AOLPress. It's available for Windows, Mac, and even UNIX (although it was still called GNNPress for the Mac and UNIX versions at press time). And the best news of all: It's both jammed with features and absolutely free. Truly free, with no commercial version available at all. Don't like free? Try this honey out and decide afterward. It's close to being the best of the lot, it's upgraded frequently, and free is free.

So what's it got? First off, it has the most up-to-date HTML features list of all of them. Lots of HTML 3.2 in here, and a good try at keeping up with the latest Netscape and Microsoft extensions. Certainly better than NavGold, at least, and at least on par with FrontPage. You get an image map creator, the ability to save directly to the network (like FrontPage), and fully interactive forms and tables features. It's not wonderful with Frames, but it's handling of images almost makes up for it. And, like most of these packages, you can drag and drop a number of elements straight onto the page.

Like FrontPage, AOLPress is more than a page creator. It's also a Web assistant. You can get a graphical view of your Web with the MiniWeb's features, and the ability to slide pages from place to place. And, as with FrontPage, there's a solid database connectivity feature that takes away some of the pain of dealing with databases. Download the equally strong AOLServer (also free), and all you need is a machine connected to the Net to do your site all by yourself.

AOLPress puts your documents, the included browser, and features like the help files, in individual windows. This is possibly it's only real quirk. After a short while, you feel as though you're in a jungle of windows, never quite sure what you're working on. Add to that some crash problems—better now than before, certainly—and you have the only possible concerns. But at this price, you'd have to have a truly astounding reason not to give it a try (and, no, disliking AOL is no excuse for ignoring a fantastic value).

The document in AOLPress 1.2 displays the image map and the form properly, and further down the page (not shown here) the graphic buttons are correctly aligned. The table is intact, but somewhat askew in its display. Unrecognized HTML code will show as text within the document.


AOLpress - [Welcome to Netscape]
File Edit Element Format Table Tools Browse Window Help
Location: d:\data7\webpag7\netscap2.htm
Title: Welcome to Netscape
NAVIGATOR GOLD 3.0 JUST RELEASED
Select here and click below
JavaScript Enabled

continued on page 47

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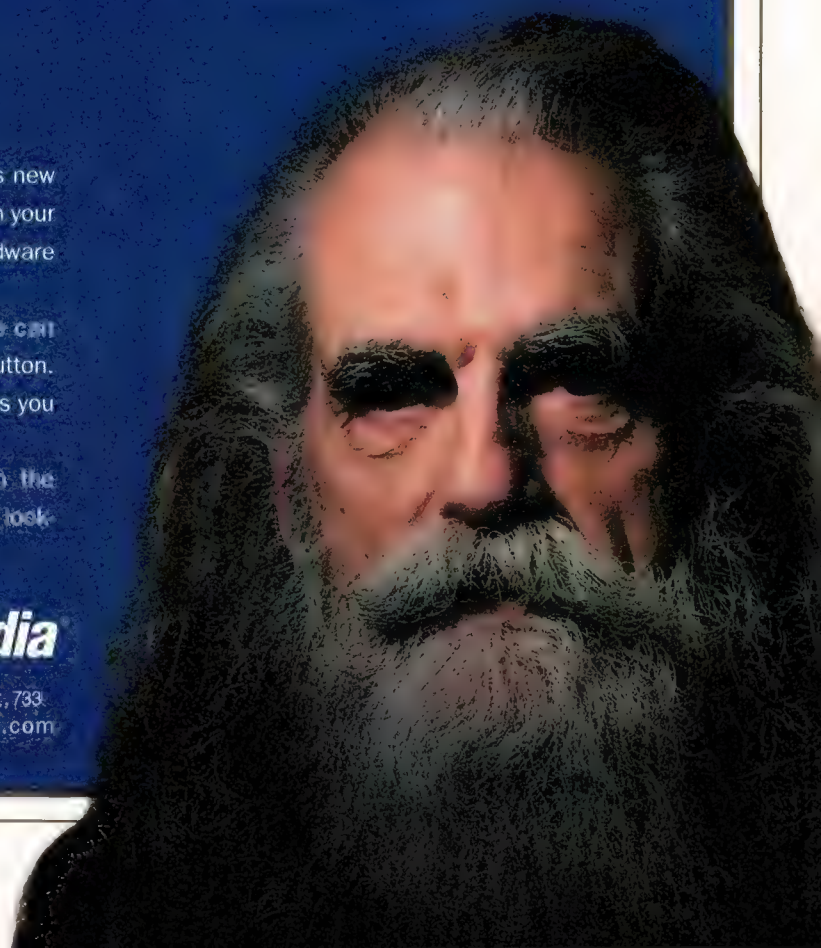


So Which One Is Best?

Your choice. The good news is that all four of these are strong at what they're designed for. If you want to slap together some pages to get started, go for NavGold, the feature-poorest editor of the bunch but very satisfying to use. If you need a strong Mac editor, take PageMill. If you want full Microsoft interoperability, plus a full WYSIWYG editor with site management tools built in, go for FrontPage. And if you want to see what WYWIWYG editing is all about without forking over the bucks, or if you're an AOL member with an AOL-supported home page, download AOLPress. If you're forced to make a choice immediately, one that you'll have to stick with, you're best off with FrontPage if you're a Win95/NT user, and PageMill/SiteMill if you're on the Mac. Keep in mind, though, that no matter which one you choose, it'll always be a bit behind the new HTML extensions. So you can't completely say goodbye to HTML coding, at least not if you're determined to stay at the cutting edge of Web design.

Non-WYSIWYG HTML Editors

By Amy Helen Johnson

Sadly, there are some things a WYSIWYG editor just can't do. If you want flexibility in the HTML elements you use and pinpoint control over how they're applied, then consider a straight HTML text editor. What you lose in drag and drop features you gain in speed and smaller size—but, of course, you'll need to know all the HTML tags by heart, or have a strong reference source. Here are three HTML text editors that are worth the cost.

WINDOWS EDITORS

FlexEd v1.7c

FlexEd uses a nifty shortcut for manipulating tag attributes, perfect for speeding up the edit-preview-debug design cycle. Double-click on a tag and a pop-up dialog box appears that gives you full control over a tag's formatting options. In other editors, you must delete and reenter the HTML code. But minimalist help files aren't much help, and crowding toolbars around three sides of the display area made me hunt too hard for the right button. Both 16- and 32-bit versions are available. Registration $25, Infoflex Pty Ltd.
http://www.infoflex.com.au/flexed.htm

Gomer version 1.4

I like Gomer because it has a command to automatically add basic break and paragraph tags to imported files, which lets me easily convert existing material, such word processor documents, into a Web page. The other reason I favor Gomer (besides its cool lizard logo) is that it walks me through all the minimal HTML for a new Web page, including initializing background, text, and link colors—basic elements that other editors leave to me to forget. There's a 32-bit version 2.0 in the works. Registration $15, Stoopid Software
http://www.clever.net/gomer/index.html

WebEdit 2.0.1 for Windows 95

If I had room for only one of these HTML editors on my hard drive, WebEdit for Windows 95 would be it. It has no learning curve, thanks to the well-organized layout of its drop-down tag menus and its straightforward wizards and templates. If you're a beginning coder, you'll appreciate the in-depth help and the split-screen preview mode, which gives you a fast peek at how your page will appear to visitors. Although WebEdit boasts that it has multi-colored tag coding, reality fell short of my expectation: WebEdit highlights tags only when a document loads; any file you build from scratch doesn't have highlighting until you close and reopen it.

For people who are still working on 16-bit Windows 3.1 machines, you can get a version of WebEdit with fewer features. WebEdit 2.0 Standard supports the fundamental building blocks of Web pages, including standard HTML tags and Netscape and Microsoft variants, client-side image maps, special characters, tables, and forms. It also has ease-of-use features, such as a preview mode, tag stripping, shortcut keys, and a spell checker. What it's missing are the features for hard-core Web-page programmers—things like Frame and form wizards, tag and link validation, and that disappointing tag highlighting—which the Windows 95 version includes.

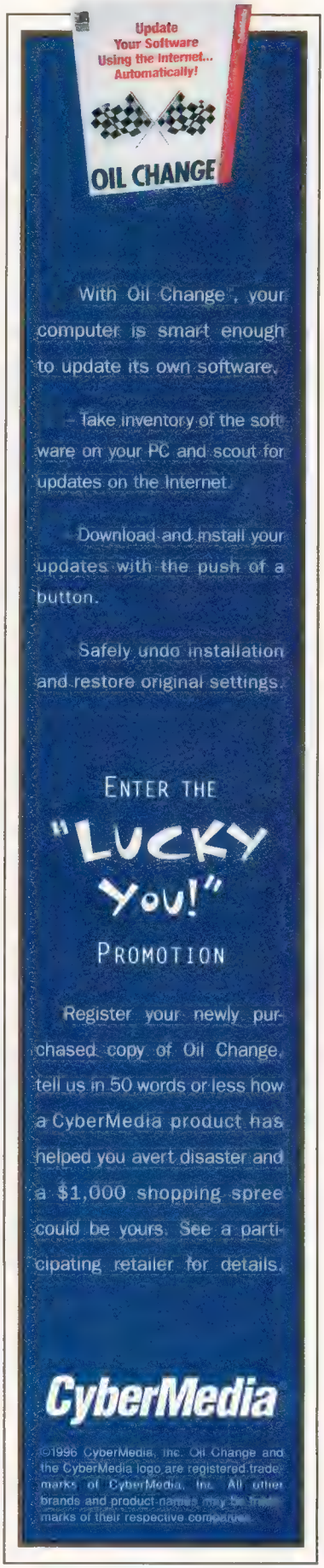
This is an expensive editor, but it's worth it. Windows 95, registration $109.95; standard registration 39.95, Nesbitt Software Corp.
http://www.nesbitt.com

MACINTOSH EDITORS

BBEdit Lite 3.5.1 is the freeware version of the popular commercial Macintosh HTML editor, BBEdit. It's missing many features, but not the important ones. Free, Barebones Software
http://www.barebones.com/

For a more full-featured editor, check out PageSpinner. It supports all the basic HTML functions, plus Frames, JavaScript, and Java. Registration $25, Optima System
http://www.algonet.se/~optima/pagespinner.html

*Amy Helen Johnson writes about the Internet, applica[illegible], and is known to her mother as **amyhelen@pobox.com**.*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blue pages

The Net's Directory

November 1996

Howdy, shoppers, and welcome to the Blue Pages, where everything's always on special. This month I thought I'd take a minute to address a persistent question. Folks keep asking me, "Pat, how do you find all those urls?" Well, the truth is, they're hot. I work like a thief in the night, see, or a drunken pirate, ransacking other peoples links as happily as the Grinch stole Christmas. And no teary-eyed repentance down in Whoville either.

But seriously, it requires a lot of idle surfing, usually kicked off by sites that readers, friends, and colleagues send my way. After that, it's all happenstance and serendipity. The tough part is choosing sites of the month. You'll notice that some of the urls we choose to highlight get lukewarm reviews—enthusiastic, but not without reservations. Personally, I like it that way. We're not cheerleaders, after all: We're critics.

My only hope is that you benefit from our mean labors. As always, I encourage you to send your favorite sites to blue@thenet-usa.com. Happy surfing. *-PJ*

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blue pages rating system

We use three different criteria when we review a Web site. Check out our little icons to see how well each site measures up. For a more specific description of reviews criteria, visit our Web site at http://www.thenet-usa.com/blue_pages/ratings.html

CONTENT
How much content is there, and of what quality? Is there enough to satisfy someone interested in this topic and seeking to learn more about it? Is it good enough to keep you coming back?

- Runneth over
- Half-empty
- Dry

AESTHETIC MERIT
How attractive is the site? Though prettiness can't usually stand on its own, the layout *is* still important.

- A looker
- Not half bad
- A dog

TECHNOLOGICAL SMARTNESS
How well-constructed is the site? Are there effective navigational tools? Does the site creatively work around HTML conventions and limitations?

- Brilliant
- Aglow
- Dim

net SITE of the MONTH Nov 96

The best sites we've found in their respective categories this month are designated Sites of the Month. Look for the icon to the left to help identify these sites.

net rave — And be sure to check out sites we "rave" about, marked by this icon.

THE BLUE PAGES SAVES TREES!

Each 32-page Blue Pages saves:
- 300 trees
- 125,000 gallons of water
- 550 cubic feet of landfill
- 1,100 pounds of air emissions

So far (since we expanded the Blue Pages in our March 96 issue), we've saved:
- 2,700 trees
- 1,125,000 gallons of water
- 4,900 cubic feet of landfill
- 9,900 pounds of air emissions

arts

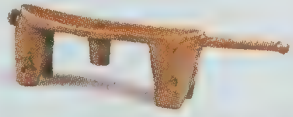
500X Gallery
http://www.whytel.com/users/rawspace/500.html

The 500X Gallery, operating since 1978 in the great state of Texas, encourages young and emerging artists to take creative risks in an uninhibited forum, free from the restrictions of mainstream galleries. The nicely designed site allows you to view the works of the 500X Gallery staff and members and provides links to related galleries. Especially good is the Pablum link, which includes, in addition to record reviews and Japanese culture, a DIY HTML page called Webhead. *–ES*

Africa: The Art of a Continent
http://artnetweb.com/guggenheim/africa/index.html

net rave

Africa: The Art of a Continent is an exhibition celebrating "the extraordinary contribution of the African continent to the world's visual culture." Don't despair if you can't get to the Guggenheim to see it in time; the site alone would be worth the price of admission. An interactive map takes you to each region in Africa, discussing its artistic characteristics in particular. In-depth descriptions tell as much about African history as its art, and photographs make this almost as rich as a walk through. "Africa in New York," the citywide portion of the exhibit, includes photography, film, music, dance, symposia, and lectures. It's a beautifully designed site with engaging text. Hang out here and learn something. *–ES*



A headrest, in case you're wondering

aRtsLab
http://sgva-serv1.ucsd.edu/~art-slab/

net rave

ARtsLab, UCSD's Visual Arts Department site, offers online exposure to a host of artists, visions, and themes. The Institute of Sociometry page, housing a rich variety of subchurches, secret societies, and guerrilla artists, is the aRtsLab high point, with links to the San Francisco Cacophony Society and the Luther Blisset Home Page. Learn about Neoists, Psychogeography, and the decline of Venice. You can search the aRtsLab index by artist or subject. How 'bout Apparatus Luscious or Dadatorial? Thought-provoking projects are presented with a dose of self-indulgence, the inevitable mixed bag of art school. Well worth the visit. *–ES*

Graf Cafe
http://www.tiac.net/users/phage/

net rave

Graf Cafe is targeted at graffiti fans. It features more than 300 photographs of graffiti from Boston neighborhoods, organized by location. There's also a surprisingly polished and sometimes wry FAQ to explain the vocabulary (tagging, bombing, piecing), acronyms, and subculture, as well as recent developments, such as the emerging sticker movement. The splash page features sophisticated 3D graphics and HTML "onMouseOver"

fun. Links to eight pro-graffiti and two anti-graffiti sites. Their philosophy: "A writer is not a petty vandal, he neither smashes car windows nor overturns gravestones; a writer is an artist." –*GB*

Havana Street
http://www.eden.com/~havana/index.html

Havana Clipart is a company that specializes in 1940's era graphics. There are some freebies available on this site, but if you want the goods, get ready to spend between $59 and $79 bucks for a CD-ROM. As a site, it doesn't offer much except for page after page of faces, people, and vehicles done with a wartime twist, which are fun to look at. Links to a zine called Retro and The Clipart Connection site. –*ES*

In Our Path
http://www.tmn.com/iop/

This combination of photos, essays, and interactive maps follows the construction and aftermath of the Century Freeway Corridor in Los Angeles. Beginning the project in 1982, photographer Jeff Gates soon found the ramifications of his curiosity broadening as the project took shape. The end–product of his work was several exhibits/community symposia, which are combined on the site. Seeking simply to capture the sense of "abandoned suburbia" that the scenery exuded, Gates became caught up in the stories of the people being displaced by the freeway as well as those involved in building it. –*ES*

Lambright Collection
http://www.lambright com

The Lambright Collection is just plain spooky. A guy named Wayne Lambright III is madly in love with himself. He paints, which is a fine hobby, but apparently thinks he is one of the greatest artists ever to daub a palette. He lists himself in the company of Gauguin, Da Vinci, Renoir, Michelangelo, Cezanne, Monet, and Picasso. As if to justify the hefty price tags on his work, he asks rhetorically, "If Van Gogh were alive today, how much would you pay for one of his paintings?" Plenty, Wayne, but you're no Van Gogh. –*GB*

The Paintings of Vermeer
http://www.ccsf.caltech.edu/~roy/vermeer/

The Paintings of Vermeer is a tribute to 17th century painter, Jan Vermeer. Only 35 of his paintings have survived, and all of them are available here in digitized form. Vermeer's art was ignored for more than 200 years after his death, but in the nineteenth century his photorealistic work became widely recognized. Scholars suspect Vermeer's realism was

The Girl with a Pearl Earring: Photorealism circa 1665

the result of his using a camera obsura, one of the forerunners of the photographic camera. Intended for art scholars, the site makes the subject accessible for a lay audience as well. –*GB*

The World of Allen Toney
http://webpages.marshall.edu/~jtoney/

net rave

Allen Toney is hailed as one of the most innovative computer artists of his day. But it goes further than that. Nightmares, day sweats, bad acid, and underdone potatoes are as much a part of the scenery

Photo-surrealism circa 1996

here as neo-classical Catholicism and iconography rendered as only a recovering Papist could render it. The images are, by turns, rich and oily–liquid mercury in a twister–and mythical/mathematical. Take a walk through the gallery. If you can take it, "Dream Deeper," if not, you can "Wake Up" at any time. One can only imagine what Toney sees when he closes his eyes in the dark. –*ES*

Theatre Direct, International
http://theatredirect.com/

Theatre Direct, International seeks to become for live theatre what 777-FILM has become for movie theaters. Background information, showtimes, ticket sales, and gossip are provided for live shows in New York, touring U.S. stage companies, and London. The gossip seems like satire. To wit, did you know ex-Monkee Mickey Dolenz is writing a musical version of the 1970's sitcom *Happy Days*? It premieres in London's West End before 1997. And on Broadway next season, audiences will delight to a toe-tapping musical about the sinking of the Titanic. Somewhere out there, someone is trembling with anticipation. –*GB*

bizarre

Illustrated Guide to Crackers
http://mathlab.sunysb.edu/~elijah/cstuff/index.html

While this site might be considered bizarre by some, cracker fans will find the information presented here as important as a good knife is for cutting cheese. A dozen or so crackers are pictured on the site, and a click on their image yields packaging information, suggested "dosage" (serving size), and ingredients. Missing, however, are calorie and fat content information (a significant oversight in the case of peanut butter Ritz Bits)! Crumb-rating might be useful too, for those times when you're in bed jonesing for a saltine. Maybe you can post your experiences on the subject in the site's cracker forum. As Andy Griffith once said, "Mmmmm.... Good cracker!" –*DP*

Last Ditch
http://www.bway.net/~ditch/

I got so caught up in page after page telling me to turn back, I was hooked. There's not much to the Last Ditch site, but then they're the first ones to say so. What you do get is some funny writers

No sleep till the Sewage Report

who make fun of their site so effectively, it comes off as a success. Good self-deprecating stream-of-consciousness stuff, and the Sewage Report is a must-read. –*ES*

Lip Balm Anonymous
http://members.aol.com/LipBalmA/index.html

And I thought I was the only one! Start your recovery here with the proven Twelve Step method. Principle #1 is "We admitted we were powerless over lip balm–that our lives had become unmanageable." Learn all about the evil industry of addiction, from Carmex to Blistex, and help fight the insidious dependency. Something eating at you? Ask Lip Balm Anonymous. One troubled soul wanted to know if Vaseline counted as lip balm. (It does.) All the support you need is right here, friends. Hello, my name is Suzie, and I'm addicted to chapstick. –*DP*

Mike's Garbage Pail Kids
http://www.public.iastate.edu/~mdlarson/garbage.html

"Welcome to the most disgusting page on the Web!" reads the opener at this site devoted to the trading card world's answer to that saccharine doll craze from the cabbage patch. Well, call me unflappable, but on the gross-out gauge, this one hardly registers. On any gauge, in fact, the needle is pegging empty. The pages load slowly, the images are poorly rendered, and most of the images lack links to content as of this writing. As for the 1980's card craze, it's strictly pre-adolescent gag material that would hardly scandalize your grandmother. –*PJ*

Phone Losers of America
http://www.peak.org/~bueno/

Apparently inspired by a guy who dabbles in illicit phone codes and credit card fraud, Phone Losers of America takes as its premise the fact that symbols of communication authority should be made fun of: Ma Bell, AOL, and Bill Gates. There's a Prank Phone Call page with sound bites of choice harassment, reviews of recordings of more prank calls, extensive links to phone and bad attitude-related sites. Also, an anti-award page. Self–mocking we-are-proud-to-be-phone-losers humor throughout. To hear the site's ringleader, Redbox Chilipepper tell it, "everyone's talking about PLA. If only they were saying something nice." –*ES*

Project Denny's
http://entropy.muc.muohio.edu/~p7a77/dennys.html

net rave

Project Denny's documents Jason Alan Pfaff's quest to visit as many Denny's restaurants as possible before he dies. The congealed-egg-yolk-yellow backgrounds, photographs of luridly colored Denny's meals, and thick white coffee cups that serve as icons evoke the Denny's experience almost right down to the smell. What sets Project Denny's apart from the typical one-note-joke tribute page is its extensive store of what could be considered actual

Grand Slam, anyone?

research–reports on each Denny's visit describing the wait person, food eaten, and overall experience–along with an organization that takes it all seriously: You can search four different indices, plus a Project Sampler. Check it out; it's a hoot. –*SS*

CONTENT	AESTHETIC MERIT	TECHNO SMARTNESS
Runneth over	A looker	Brilliant
Half-empty	Not half bad	Aglow
Dry	A dog	Dim

The Bacon Oracle
http://www.cs.virginia.edu/~bct7m/bacon.html

Any idea what the Bacon number of Max Von Sydow is? Well, Max appeared in the film *Awakenings* with Robert De Niro and De Niro was in *Sleepers* with Kevin Bacon, giving Max a Bacon number of two. See how it works? All of this information is brought to you courtesy of The Oracle of Bacon at Virginia and two guys who set out to prove that no one could have a Bacon number bigger than four, since he always acts in movies with big casts of famous actors. You can also play a version of the game with Schwartzenegger as the center of the universe. *–ES*

The Chaos Page
www.newwave.net/~rem001

The Chaos Page tries so very hard to be irreverent, wacky, iconoclastic, but mostly it's just sophomoric. Knee-slappers like "This page best viewed with Nutscape" and "member of the free beer online Pabst Blue Ribbon Campaign" abound, and one button invites you to "click here for a gratuitous beaver shot" With a heavy sigh, I did, and yes, it's a buck-toothed builder of dams–pornography would at least have been surprising. There's an occasional laugh here, but you have to wade through a lot of inanity–not to mention far too many annoying flashing text blocks–to find it. *–SS*

The Lost Elvis Diaries
http://home.mem.net/~welk/elvisdiaries.html

This broad parody of hard-boiled detective novels puts a reporter on the trail of The King's rumored but previously unseen diaries. If incessant Elvis jokes, stock characters, and lines like "I sensed he

Picked up the jumpsuit from the cleaners, took my "prescriptions"...

was lying. I don't know what it was. Maybe it was the glint in his eye, maybe it was the stammer, or maybe it was the 'I'm Lying' T-shirt he was wearing," strike you as darn funny, you might enjoy this chapter-a-week serial yarn. Unfortunately, the diaries themselves don't appear until chapter 15, and then only as dull one or two-sentence entries. Maybe that's the kicker–Elvis's diaries are boring. *–SS*

The Slurpee Shrine
http://www.students.uiuc.edu/~munoz/slurpee/slurhome.html

A concept in search of content, The Slurpee Shrine is unlikely to satisfy any

Digital paean to the slushy concoction

but the most ardent worshippers of the icy treat. Other than a clever animated Slurpee graphic and the Slurpee Facts section, which is nothing more than a list of flavors, there's not much here–no Slurpee history, no personal Slurpee experiences, no Slurpee lore. You can add to the list of flavors and vote for your favorite, but that's it. The somewhat desperate-sounding plea for ideas leads me to believe that after his initial great idea, the Slurpmaster found himself sitting in front of a computer screen saying, "Now what?" *–SS*

The Squashed Bug Zoo
http://squashed.roach.org/zoo.html

The weirdly elegant, sepia-colored photo of a long-legged, delicate-winged dead insect that serves as the Squashed Bug Zoo's background gives this frankly disgusting concept an aura of aesthetic inquiry. But not to worry, fans of insect gore, there's nothing high-minded about the presentation of this collection of mostly viewer-submitted squashed-bug photographs. Each specimen is accompanied by a caption describing the critter and the circumstances of its death. There's also a small-vertebrate section, which is not as nauseating as you might think, although I didn't have the stomach to view the rat part. Definitely an uncommon passion. –SS

Unofficial Wendy's Home page
http://www.vbc.net/~wendysnet/

net rave

Set up by a couple of wacky young men from New Jersey, the Wendy's Unofficial Home page is an expression of their love for Wendy's restaurants. Louis and Ish: Two men with a mission: "to visit every Wendy's we had knowledge of, starting with New Jersey, then moving on, limited only by our $5.05-$6.00 an hour jobs." Come to the site for Wendy's reviews, Wendy's floorplans, and links to like-minded individuals. There's an interactive map, thorough directions to Wendy's in their area, Wendy's FAQs, and an extensive photo gallery. Tune in soon for information about their pilgrimage to the very first Wendy's in Columbus Ohio. *–ES*

corporate

Budweiser Online
http://www.budweiser.com

Engines revving and testosterone cours-

The Contortion Home Page

http://www.escape.com/~silverbk/contortion/

net SITE of the MONTH Nov 96

For most of us, the "art" of contortion is a strange joke, an activity confined to freak shows and obscure Eastern religions. Even the most cultured among us, when faced with the sight of a human being contorted in such a way that their head is between their legs and facing in the *wrong* direction, are liable to say something along the lines of, "Now looky there: That person's all bent around every which way." It just doesn't inspire the same awe and reverence that ballet does, or gymnastics. It's more likely to make us wince than applaud.

Whether contortionism is an oddity or an art may be an open question, but make no mistake, there's an active, worldwide contortionist community. It may have remained in the shadows until now, but The Contortion Home Page changes all that, baring the formerly arcane world to the light of day. With materials on how "normal" people can train to be contortionists, it may even promote understanding and a new era of appreciation.

This site is not just a fly-by-night Internet joke page, mind you, but a practical encyclopedia of contortionism designed by two aficionados and practitioners of the discipline, who go by the Internet names of Sir Supple and The Silverback. Good Web page design calls for a certain measure of simplicity, which The Contortion Home Page manages by sticking to just four sections: Photos, Literature, Contacts, and Links.

The photo gallery is a good place to start, as contortionists are performers, first and foremost, and play to the eye. The gallery does not disappoint, with pictures organized according to the various performers, artists with names like Raven Merle and Charis, Queen of Elastic. The extent to which they can stretch their bodies is amazing, straining the imagination as much as it does the tendons.

The Contortion Home Page is not just about gawking at this rarity of human endeavor: The literature section provides the context necessary to appreciate the "how" and the "why" of it. Documents explain how a contortionist trains, how the natural flexibility of the youthful body must be retained by constant stretching. If even the most accomplished contortionist stops training for a year, it seems, they may never contort again.

The contacts and resources section offers free info and gives enthusiasts an outlet for purchasing video tapes of performers such as Ula, who in one scene "surprises unsuspecting travelers by jumping out of their suitcases!" For people who intend to follow contortionism, there's a newsletter, "Limber Times," as well as a CD-ROM. *–WKC*

Levi's

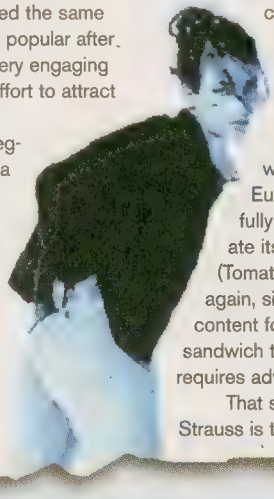
http://www.levi.com

SITE of the MONTH Nov 96

Certain corporate entities are so much a part of our lives, you wouldn't think they'd need to advertise. Levi's, the company that invented blue jeans, and its trademark product are at least as American as apple pie and baseball. They're certainly more pervasive. You're probably wearing a pair as you read this.

Founded in 1853 by Levi Strauss, who figured, correctly, that the material used to make tents and covered wagons would make a good pair of pants, Levi's has endured changing times and fashion upheavals ever since. The classic 501's, after a few modifications, have stayed the same since 1922, and the denim jacket, introduced in 1953, is still popular after all these years. The dates come courtesy of Levi's very big, very engaging Web site: a multimedia extravaganza that goes all-out in an effort to attract folks to its online promotional effort.

The history section was, not surprisingly, my favorite segment of the site. Laid out along a timeline, the site shows, at a glance, when, say, copper rivets were introduced (1873), or when belt loops became a fixture of American fashion (not until 1922). There's a slightly patronizing "history quiz" that tests your knowledge of 1930's America, and how Levi's helped shape Depression-era fashion. Also worth a look is the Denim Dictionary, chock full of alphabetically organized Levi's trivia. Did you know about the "crotch rivet," an extra copper rivet that, until 1942, graced all 501's. Apparently, cowboys complained to Levi's that when crouching around the campfire, the bygone rivet tended to heat up, causing much discomfort.



The site gets a little out of control anytime it strays from the subject of jeans to venture down subcultural alleyways of no obvious significance. What, after all, do raves, anime, spoken word performances, Haight-Ashbury, and space aliens have to do with what pants I wear? And why would I want to read the bio's of the "stars" from their European commercials? Apparently, not content with its rightfully prominent place in fashion worldwide, Levi's wants to create its own breed of cool, with the assistance of hip ad firms (Tomato) and graphic designers (Designers Republic). Then again, sites like these can no longer rely on others to create content for them; unlike television, where advertisers could just sandwich their pitches between the shows, the Web model requires advertisers to put on their own show.

That said, there is such a thing as trying too hard. And Levi Strauss is teetering on that edge. *–AD*

ing through the veins of men across America reverberate through Budweiser Online, like the sound of the ocean dimly echoing in a conch. The site features automobile race information ad nauseam, beermaster tips, photos from spring breaks in Fort Lauderdale, Cancun, and the Bahamas, and Thirst for Knowledge (exercise your brain with "how to say 'beer' in 33 languages"). You can also buy Bud Gear (clothing and accessories) and download the Bud Frogs screensaver. It's pretty obvious who Budweiser's target audience is–you know who you are–and there's plenty here for them. *–RS*

Campbell Soups

http://www.campbellsoups.com

A beacon to hungry Web navigators

Ever since Andy Warhol made it cool, Campbell's has possessed an enviable position in the soup world. Unfortunately, Campbell's Web site is a lot like their soup: warm and comforting, but not exactly overflowing with substance (which is fine if you're home sick). The standard stuff is here: Campbell's Soup recipes (you know, the green beans with cream of mushroom and french fried onion rings on top), Campbell's Soup souvenirs, and general information about the company and its other brands. I found the Seasonal Sampler section to be particularly humorous, with suggested menus for significant yearly events (Campbell's on Yom Kippur?). *–RS*

Compuserve's Our World

http://ourworld.compuserve.com/

Compuserve's Our World attempts to develop a "global community" by providing free software, graphics, and one megabyte of server space for anyone who wants to put up their own home page (providing you are willing to forego pornography, obscenity, and racist material). While this is an intriguing concept, the 20 or so home pages I scanned were disappointingly uniform, most featuring a photo or two and a series of links. This still doesn't quite feel like a community to me; rather a bunch of individuals gathered together in a central location. A beginning, perhaps, but there's a lot more to community than a shared interest in having your picture on the Internet. *–RS*

CONTENT	AESTHETIC MERIT	TECHNO SMARTNESS
Runneth over	A looker	Brilliant
Half-empty	Not half bad	Aglow
Dry	A dog	Dim

Diesel Jeans

http://www.diesel.com/

net rave

Diesel spins the funk

Diesel Jeans' Web site sports the faux '70's look of its fashions: Bell bottoms, halter tops, and hip huggers are showcased at this site, which is rendered in blinding neon colors and swirling, psychedelic patterns. Its design metaphor is that of a funky, slightly seedy hotel. Enter through The Foyer, and take the guided tour to peek through keyholes at a series of strange collages. The Ground Floor boutique, with fashions for kids, women, and men, made me wish I had kept the beloved terrycloth romper of my childhood. This is a refreshingly wacky site that doesn't take itself seriously at all and offers some fun surprises. *–RS*

E-Data

http://www.e-data.com/

E-Data owns the rights to a 1985 patent that has far-reaching implications for many businesses. Simply put, the patent involves the technology that allows for the sale and distribution of products electronically using encryption methods. Currently involved in complex patent infringement litigation, E-Data is, in the meantime, offering "amnesty" to companies who may be infringing, providing they purchase licensing agreements to use this technology. Companies who have taken advantage of this offer include Adobe Systems, IBM, and Kidsoft. While the patent is currently in contention, this issue is worth checking into for companies conducting electronic commerce. *–RS*

L'Oreal

http://www.lorealcosmetics.com/

net rave

Perky models strut their stuff at the L'Oreal Web site, their lives vastly improved through the use of L'Oreal cosmetics. This site has the look and sub-

Shiny, happy person #1

stance of a fashion magazine, with timely tips on seasonal colors and styles, fashion and make-up advice (how do you keep your mascara looking fresh all day?), and an online questionnaire in Let's Get Purse-onal, where you can describe the contents of your, guess what, purse. The site is a looker–no doubt about it–but while it may catch the eye, there's not much to engage the mind. –*RS*

Moto LaVerda
http://www.keycomm.it/~laverda/

This bilingual site is sponsored by LaVerda, the Italian motorcycle manufacturer. The text is in both Italian and English (the stilted, translated variety) and

Italian-style crotch rockets

features brief descriptions of the various models, along with photos for enthusiasts to drool over. A full line of clothing and accessories will also be available through the site some time in the future. This is not an overly hyped-up site, and possesses a certain homespun charm that a lot of the slicker corporate sites lack. –*RS*

Radisson Hotels
http://www.radisson.com

net rave

Not a corporate vanity page, the Radisson Hotels site exemplifies how the Internet can offer customers ease, convenience, and service beyond the usual. You can't access the site unless you have Netscape 2.01 or higher, as it makes extensive use of Frames, Java, and encrypted transactions, but once you've installed the software (link from the Radisson site), you can enter a personal/business profile, check rates and availability, and reserve rooms in Radisson hotels all over the world. The interface is relatively simple and friendly, and Frames facilitate navigation. –*RS*

Working Assets Online
http://www.wald.com/news.html

Cynics beware: This site is so well-intentioned and sincere it's almost painful. After all, Working Assets is the company that genuinely cares about the environment, human rights, racism, and poverty in America. They also actually do something about it by providing telephone service and donating 1% of your charges to nonprofit organizations (a relatively painless way to give to charity). Newsbite, as the site is called, is a compilation of articles on social/political issues such as gay rights, ending the Cuba embargo, and the epidemic of church burnings in the South. Will Durst, irreverant San Francisco columnist is also featured in the Daily Dose of Durst. –*RS*

education

Accepted
http://www.accepted.com

Linda Abraham, the author of *How to Write an Outstanding Personal Statement*, maintains a Web site that aims to help you do just that. Her rather plain page offers concise, useful pointers on how to advantageously turn your personal statement into a "human interest" piece starring yourself. Separate strategies are outlined for medical, business, law, and graduate schools. You can also read the endorsements of applicants whom Abraham has helped to gain admission with her editing services, to which she devotes the rest of her site. If you're interested in professional help, send an e-mail or call her. –*AN*

AP Institute
http://www.gnacademy.org:8001/~tuttleri/tuttleri.htm

Maybe you can't judge an online correspondence school by the quality of the course catalog's prose, but in the case of the AP Institute, there's precious little else to go on. Sentences like this one, from the Creative Writing course description, do not inspire confidence: "And, as writers, one always needs non-judgmental input into how the writing sounds and comes across." Indeed. The course offerings, ranging from Ancient Greek to Esperanto, are appealing. But with no instructor biographies or information about the "institute" at last visit, I'd be leery of signing on for any of these "interesting and dynamic" classes. –*SS*

C-EdRes
http://cnet.unb.ca/c-edres/

C-EdRes claims to be a "one-stop site" for finding and evaluating education-related Internet resources. Joining its e-mail list will get you a weekly set of new reviews written by teachers. These aim to keep others in the education industry apprised of what's new and worthwhile on the Internet. The results are diverse and growing, and you can search the regularly updated online database. If you're an educator and would like to publicize an online resource among your peers, C-EdRes is a good place to do it. An added feature is the the list of arts-related links. –AN

Collegiate Choice Walking Tours
http://www.register.com/collegiate

There's not a frill in sight here, just a good idea presented plainly and honestly. Collegiate Choice Walking Tours is a collection of videotaped student-guided tours of more than 300 college and university campuses. The developers, a group of independent college advisors, are quick to point out that these tapes are not professionally produced, but, they say with admirable restraint, the student guides are "perhaps a bit more forthright than some admissions and marketing departments." In addition to a list of schools visited and ordering information, the site provides a helpful tip sheet for prospective students who plan to make in-person visits. –*SS*

Education Place
http://www.eduplace.com/

Created by Houghton Mifflin, the Education Place is packed with fine activities for grammar school students, plus ideas for teachers and advice for parents on helping kids learn. But to my mind the site's most delightful feature is its update of Mad Libs, called Wacky Web Tales. These things will always be funny–what else produces phrases like "After handing our toes to Leonardo Da Vinci at the door

Mad Libs by any other name...

...?"? Enjoy them with your friends and family. Other games help kids hone their skills in science and math, and the Project Center gives teachers access to online projects as well as non-Internet-based classroom activities. –*SS*

Family Education Network
http://families.com/

net rave

FEN is one part of the highly esteemed Education Publishing Group's multimedia strategy for helping parents and children prepare themselves for an increasingly competitive world. This is a thoughtful, technologically literate, and exceptionally well-designed site featuring articles by Ivy League educators. Topics range from browsing the Web with your kids and managing your teenager's finances to balancing your career with your family life. A superb BBS points you to numerous concurrent discussions, and a section on exceptional parents tells the stories of families that endure grave or uncommon situations, and enables them to find their peers around the world. –*AN*

FishNet
http://www.jayi.com/Open.html

net rave

The lover of low puns who named FishNet didn't do it justice–this is a meaty site, rich in resources for high-achieving, college-bound teens. The extensive College Guide has a few weaknesses, but makes up for them with great features such as Dear Admissions Guru, an advice column written by admissions officers. Edge e-zine is substantive but not eggheadish, and KnowBase lets users find online articles on a range of topics. Even if higher education is only a dim memory, FishNet is worth a visit for Street Speak, a user-compiled dictionary of slang that will help you sound hip again–or at least understand what the kids are saying. –*SS*

MOO, an Educational Tool
http://mbhs.bergtraum.k12.ny.us/moo.html

MOO in this case refers not to cows (although if you're one of those who just can't get enough of bovines, there are plenty of irrelevant cow pics here), but to MUD Object Oriented, as in a type of multiuser environment. The site is simply a list of links to papers, FAQs, and resource collections containing general information on MOOs, as well as discussions of their social and educational uses and connections to MOOs themselves. The page was due for an update when I visited–several of the links weren't working–but if this is your particular interest, you'll probably find something you can use here. –*SS*

Pitsco Technology Education
http://www.askanexpert.com/wel.html

You'd expect more than a scroll-it script and a "weird science" graphic to announce the site of a company claiming to be the "leader in innovative technology education." And what Pitsco's site lacks in the whiz-bang department, it doesn't

No wonder the kids can't read

make up for anywhere else. Judging from the quality of its hubristic copy, you'd think poor spelling and grammar were cutting-edge educational strategies.The online version of its much-touted catalog provides descriptions of popular products like "Shuttle in Orbit Wall Mural" and "Tower Tester," as well as links to related sites, but this one needs work before it fulfills its own promises. –*AN*

The Cheat Web
http://pages.prodigy.com/evilash/cheat.htm

Here's a site for high school students needing a paper fast, and willing to cheat in order to pass a class. With the permission of their respective authors, Webmaster Chris Salyers offers a few dozen essays in English (*The Scarlet Letter*), science (earthworms), and history (Pompeii). According to the classification system, the material here is mostly B-level work by sophomores and juniors. In theory, you just add your name and presto–a day at the beach. However, the files are poorly formatted, riddled with garbage, and annoying to decipher, which makes doing homework seem appealing in comparison. –*AN*

entertainment

A & E
http://www.aetv.com/

A & E is one of the most underrated cable channels. Where else can you catch a "Biography" of Amelia Earhart before enjoying a guilty chuckle courtesy of Howard Stern? The A & E site is cleanly designed with deep background on its programming–from mysteries to classic movies to "Quincy" reruns. Teachers will appreciate the A & E Classroom materials, so they can help make watching TV educational! (Seriously!) If you're into A & E, it's worth stopping here to browse the daily and weekly schedules. Of course, that isn't much use if you don't have cable. As if. *–DP*

Batman TAS Encyclopedia
http://www.cmgnet.com/~ames

The series that inspired the "Dark Deco" genre of TV animation is well-documented on this truly fanatical fan's site. This is *the* place to learn the history of Gotham City's weirdest and wildest inhabitants, from familiar faces like Catwoman and Penguin to newer rogues like Joker's female flack, Harley Quinn. An episode guide reprinted from *Cinemafantastique* has also been posted, so you can keep track of your own "see and must-see" list. Alfred would be proud. *–DP*

DC Comics
http://www.dccomics.com

DC Comics hasn't got much going for it. They've got a hilariously snotty legal proclamation of their "proprietary rights throughout the universe in perpetuity" for a site that apparently hasn't been updated in months. And the proclamation forgets alternate universes. What about the scofflaws of Earth 2? (Yeah, I know, that was destroyed during the Crisis on Infinite Earths.) What about Vertigo and Paradox Press, DC's imprints for adults? The site has streaming audio of old Superman radio serials, but only one chapter is available at a time, so most visitors will never hear the beginning of any story. *–GB*

Gigaplex
http://www.gigaplex.com/

Talk about information overload! Gigaplex is a 600-plus page entertainment Webzine! Divided into around a dozen sub-sections–everything from Filmplex to Bookplex to Yogaplex to Golfplex–this site shouts comprehensiveness. Recipes, celebrity interviews, athletic tips, book excerpts, and other entertainment tidbits are all free for the browsing. (Although the writing quality could certainly be improved.) There's also plenty of related crapola to blow cash on. If I'm wrong and the successful Web publishing model turns out to be "general interest" as opposed to "hyperspecific," Gigaplex has it made. *–DP*

Harry Shearer
http://www.pobox.com/harry/

Visit the wacky home page of Harry Shearer, comedian and host of "Le Show" on NPR. Filled with character impersonations and sketches, political humor, readings from bizarre magazines, and eclectic musical interludes, "Le Show" is absolute ear candy. And for those of you who have

Shearer walks the line between clever and stupid

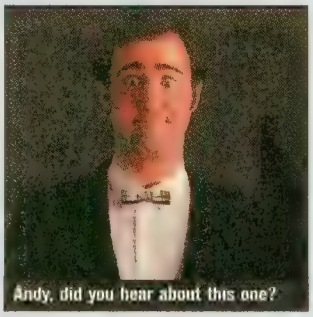
given up on radio as a dead medium, you'll recognize Shearer as the hyper-talented voice behind *The Simpsons*' Mr. Burns, Smithers, Principal Skinner, Reverend Lovejoy, Ned Flanders... Do I need to keep going? Even if you're not a fan of "Le Show," it's hard not to find something of comedic attraction on this site. (*The Simpsons* sound samples are not to be missed.) *–DP*

PythOnline
http://www.pythonline.com/fakeopen

PythOnline is for the *Python* (Monty) acolyte with time to kill. Not surprisingly, it's very funny in places, but the troupers are so wrapped up in being witty and self-referencial (not to mention self-reverential), they've forgotten about bandwidth and ease-of-use. Whereas *Python* was quick, PythOnline is plodding. Visitors can't even get from point A to point B without taking as many as seven unwanted steps between them. We're not all squawky-voiced pepper pots with endless free time. Your patience will be rewarded, but not enough. Nudge-nudge. Wink-wink. Say no more. *–GB*

The Andy Kaufman Home Page
http://fly.hiwaay.net/~bkm/akhome.htm

The Andy Kaufman Home Page is friendly

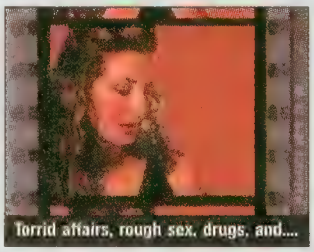

Andy, did you hear about this one?

and respectful. It's full of testimonials and trivia concerning one of the strangest celebrities of the late '70s and early '80s. Kaufman, best-known for his role as mechanic Latka Gravas on the sitcom "Taxi," was by turns a con artist, a performance artist, an actor, a stand-up comic, an Elvis impersonator, and a wrestling champion. Single-minded in his pursuit of worldwide confusion, Kaufman died of cancer in 1984 at the age of 35. This site has none of his energy. *–GB*

The East Village
http://eastvillage.com

net rave

Here's a synopsis straight off the site: "Best friends Eve and Mick have recently slept together, but right afterwards Mick hurried out of Eve's apartment. Both were very uncomfortable ... Mick especially, since he had also been sleeping with


Torrid affairs, rough sex, drugs, and....

Eve's next door neighbor, Lila. But after the sex with Lila got too rough ..." You get the idea. From there it's off to the races in this "cybersoap." Now, I don't know how many soap fans cruise the Web, nor how many will want to read episodes from a monitor, but ... well, if the story intrigues you and you have time to kill, have a look-see. Personally, I think Mick and Lila make a lovely couple, even if she does play a little rough. *–PJ*

film

CameraNet
http://www.boulevards.com/cameranet/index.htm

This site commemorates the Camera Cinemas' 20 years of feeding the San Francisco Bay Area film culture. The listings will be locally useful of course, but their Web-wide crosslinks to reviews and related pages give them some global value as well. CameraNet also hosts informative pages on genres and schools, such as the currently featured Hong Kong cinema and the silent films of the '20s, so you can get the scoop on, say, Jet Li or Lon Chaney to complement a screening. The film-booker's report from Cannes is insightful, and CameraNet's appeal to a loyal community bodes well for growth. *–AN*

Chain Reaction
http://www.chain-reaction.com

net rave

The *Chain Reaction* site tries to make the film look serious, as if the future of mankind were at stake and not just the career of Keanu Reeves. (Sorry, Keanu, you'll always be Bill to me. Or was it Ted?). Of course, if you like the idea of this thriller, you can always download a screensaver with an action scene from the new movie. The Research Lab section of the site actually does offer a well-organized, if simplistic, rundown on something as serious as alternative fuel sources and current energy technology. Of course, you'll probably opt for the games instead, provided you have Shockwave. *–DA*

Early Motion Pictures
http://lcweb2.loc.gov/papr/mpixhome.html

A site we've previously visited, and enthusiastically recommended, this subset of the Library of Congress' American Memory archives lets you browse or search for titles of video clips, some quite lengthy, (like a half an hour of playing time!). The focus is on the early B&W era, from the turn-of-the-century onward, when documentation was more important than narrative content. Tour pre-earthquake San Francisco, take a steamboat ride out to the Statue of Liberty, or enjoy ethnic studies of "Life Abroad" at a time before the great homogenization of the second half of the century. Better get a fast connection: Some of these files are over 100 megs in length. *–SL*

Enzian
http://www.enzian.org/fi/index.html

Enzian could be a hell of a site if all the features it advertised worked. Though it boasts a comprehensive list of film resources on the Internet, as of this writing at least a third of the links are down, while another fifth lead to shoestring sites that aren't worth seeing in the first place. The search engine is an impotent parody of technology that shrugged "no matching entry" when I tried as sure a bet as "Marlon Brando." Enzian's primary role, then, seems to be to promote the Florida Film Festival, which, by all accounts, needs promoting. Enzian hypes the fifth year of the festival while declaring the state of Florida the ideal place to make a movie. Hmm. But, criticism notwithstanding, Enzian has potential. With some updating and housecleaning it could all come together. *–DA*

Flashers!
http://www.flashers.com/

No, it's not the sequel to *Showgirls*, it's an online magazine. Or as they call themselves, a "Showbiz Photo

CONTENT	AESTHETIC MERIT	TECHNO SMARTNESS
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Half-empty	Not half bad	Aglow
Dry	A dog	Dim

Cyberzine". It's a glorious full-color affair, with very large (and time-consuming) pictures of your favorite, and not-so-favorite, celebrities. The owner of the site wishes to dispel the image of paparazzi hiding in the bushes to take compromising pictures of celebrities. Instead you can see tasteful pictures of stars at movie premieres, awards ceremonies, gala parties, film festivals, and other big Hollywood events. Jumping from page to page can be difficult because the site is very linear. There is a regular photo caption contest to keep the fans coming back for more. *–JA*

International MPEG Bizarre 1st Film Festival

http://www.perry.com/imb1ff/imb1ff.html

The Motion Pictures Experts Group (MPEG) meets under the International Standards Organization to generate standards for digital video and audio compression. Artists use these standards to compress their work to sizes that can be feasibly distributed across the Internet (at 28.8 kbps or faster). In this fest, artist John Perry has gathered a mixed bag of animations, videos, home movies, and multimedia experiments that should interest anyone curious about the emerging art of cybercinema. I recommend viewing the German animation "Red's Nightmare." FAQs and viewers are available for newbies. And you're invited to submit a video of your own. *–AN*

Alternative title: *Discovery of Television Among the Bees*

Louise Brooks Society

http://www.slip.net/~thomasg/brooks.html

Restless and bored, Thomas Gladysz went to rent something "sexy" one night. Drawn to the packaging of "Pandora's Box," he took it home and shortly found himself enthralled. He's since developed "a passion for silent film, for the history and culture of the 1920s, and for those 'extra-cinematic' qualities [he sees] in Brooks." His Web devotional features an electronic newsletter, a filmography, and superb photo galleries complemented by interviews, trivia, and biographies culled from a growing store of archival materials. If you're a Brooks fan, you'll love this node; if you're not, it just might make you one. *–AN*

Extra-cinematic qualities and then some

Movie Cliches List

http://www.like.it/vertigo/cliches

Giancarlo Cairella has laid out a simple directory of cinematic cliches organized by topics ranging from sex and bombs to prison and product placement. This site offers hundreds of observations in the vein of "Evil geniuses who devise bombs to destroy things/people always have them detonate after at least an hour, giving the hero ample time to defuse it." Readers of the rec.arts.movies Usenet newsgroup submit their own deconstructions, and you're prompted to do so as well. In short, a humorous and revealing idea plainly executed to charming effect. Film buffs will be glued to the screen. *–AN*

Multiplicity

http://www.multiplicity.com

The Hollywood studios feel compelled, it seems, to somehow turn the Web into a vehicle for extended movie trailers, big involved things that will really help the movie buff to "get into the movie." But, near as I can tell, they invariably hinge on a gimmicky, faux-interactive interface that just makes you think twice about going to any movie by the same title. On the *Multiplicity* site, you're asked to decide whether you need a clone. Are you stressed? Bogged down by the constant push-and-pull of modern life? So on and so forth. With the content out of the way, it's on to the game, the heart and soul, it would seem, of any movie site. Requires Shockwave. *–DA*

The Godfather Trilogy

http://www.exit109.com/~jgeoff/godfathr.html

A tribute to the *Godfather* Trilogy put together by superfan Geoff "Il Padrino" Malta. Of some prominence is a signed letter from Mario Puzo, the author of the books, that reads "To My Friend Geoff: Thank you for making me famous on the internet (sic) with your beautiful and flattering Web site. In gratitude I leave you the province of Corleone in Italy." Nifty, eh? The site mostly focuses on the movie versions, however, and it doesn't lack for information. For example, there is a Corleone family timeline, contests, a buy/sell list, a mailing list to join, etc.–*JA*

The Greatest Films

http://www.filmsite.org/

I was all set to get film clips of my favorite classics–Claude Raines and Bogey strolling into the mist, Gene Hackman's Manhattan chase scene, Woody Allen casually flinging records to impress his date–but all I got were text summaries, filed by decade, genre, or a memorable quote. Of course I was expecting the impossible, given copyrights and all, but we can dream, can't we? The admitted emphasis is on older classics, and all of them are in English. The graphics are icons created by the author, so don't expect any stills for your scrapbook. *–SL*

finance

AT&T Business Network

http://www.bnet.att.com/

Today, high-tech communication is obviously an integral part of big business. Always striving to be out in front of the competition, AT&T provides this directory of business resources online. Divided into sections like Industry, News, Management, and Government, the Business Network is a rich list of links covering every element of the business world. Kudos to AT&T for posting intelligently written annotations so you don't waste too much time poking around for what you want. One drawback, however, is that the site is organized in so much detail, it can take almost a half-dozen clicks to get into the depths where the links actually dwell. *–DP*

Bank Rate Monitor

http://www.bankrate.com/

Be an informed investor–check out the Bank Rate Monitor before you get your next credit card, mortgage refinance, or consumer loan. Find out about how to get past those pesky ATM charges that tend to add up. What's the low-down on online banking, and how can it save you cash? What're smart cards, and how long will they be free? The answers are here, pal. The tips are handy, like how to figure out compound from simple interest. One nice feature is the ability to check the stock value of issues anywhere on the global market, from Karachi to Kathmandu. *–SL*

Yeah, what are smart cards??

Crabbe Huson

http://www.contrarian.com/

Crabbe Huson sounds more like something on the menu in a French restaurant than an investment firm, no? But it's an investment firm, all right, based on the "contrarian" school of buying and selling. You can read up on the Crabbe Huson philosophy at the site, an attractive, serviceable introduction to the company and its approach. To simplify, Crabbe and Huson, the two founders, believe that at crucial times in the investing process, the majority is dead wrong; therefore, when they zig, you zag. Doesn't sound all that revolutionary to me, but what do I know? You can research the fund profiles and prospectus for yourself at the site. *–PJ*

NAIC

http://www.better-investing.org/

Investors' clubs have made it onto the Web, enabling physically separate people of like-minded financial interest to pool resources (intellectual and pecuniary) for their common good. This site represents the efforts of one of the older groups around. There are tutorials for new investors, offers to sign up for the full investing courses they provide by mail, and documents detailing the investment strategy they've honed over three decades. If propinquity is your preference, check out the calendar for the next investment seminar in your area. *–SL*

Like a club, see, but for investors

NETworth

http://networth.galt.com/www/home/

net rave

A very big site from Galt Technologies and part of the Quicken Financial Network, NETworth is a very big, very well-organized site that offers four basic features: The Mutual Fund Market Manager, which allows you to track your portfolio online, track the top 25 performers, etc.; The Equities Center, for stock quotes, graphs and the like; The Financial Planner, for info on mortgages, life insurance, retirement funds, etc.; and Insider, which allows you to customize finance-oriented Web searches. I'd be lying if I said I had evaluated it all, or even that it was within my ken. Suffice it to say there is a lot here. A lot. *–PJ*

Prosperity Partners

http://www.note.com/note/pp/

Won the lottery recently? Bumming about the 20-year pay-out schedule? Sued the pants off someone and want all your money right now? Prosperity Partners is here to help. What this firm does is legally buy out your lottery ticket or other unusual cash flow instrument and present you with a lump sum of money–a technique they claim will stop inflation from eating at the value of your payments. Sounds like a good idea, but what's the catch? You certainly won't find an answer to that question on the home page. My suggestion? Wait until you hit the Pick-Six and *then* call Prosperity Partners for more information. *–DP*

SOHO America
http://work.soho.org/soho/soho.html

SOHO, as in Small Office, Home Office, not South of Houston. This organizion offers an advocacy service for small businesses for a membership fee of $33.00 a year. What you get in return for that modest layout is info and reference materials pertaining to small business, access to small biz experts, benefit offers, and a voice in Washington. Think of it as a privately run Small Business Administration. If the site is any indication, membership may be worthwhile. At the very least, it's worth a visit for anyone working out of the home. Don't leave without having a look at "Window to the World," an extensive list of links to biz-related sites. *–PJ*

gaming

Aftershock: Arcade Alley
http://www.ashock.com/html/arcadealley.html

Up for some classic video arcade action like Space Invaders and Frogger? If you're one of those people with fond memories of your Atari 2600 or who pumped quarters into games like Q*Bert and Centipede down at the mall, then you'll be overwhelmed by nostalgia for the good old days at Arcade Alley. Aftershock's programming is impeccable. Their games look and sound just like the originals, and you won't waste any quarters playing them (although you probably have a lot more quarters to spend now). Aftershock is dedicated to bringing more replicas of classic games to the Web, so watch this space; it's going to turn into a full arcade, just like they had at the mall. *–WKC*

Bingo Zone
http://www.bingozone.com/

The beloved game of churches and Indian reservations, Bingo has found its way onto the Web, and the Bingo Zone not only offers different varieties of the game, but also cash prizes. There are probably plenty of Bingo experts out there who would recognize the different kinds of Bingo games here and appreciate the diversity. The games they run are fully interactive, including players from all over the world. On weekends, the games start every 30 minutes, and run 24 hours, but on weekdays, they are only from 10 AM to 4 AM Eastern Standard Time, which should be enough for most players. *–WKC*

CleverMedia Shockwave Arcade
http://clevermedia.com/arcade/

net rave

Surfing with Shockwave? Check out the arcade (formerly Gary's gallery), especially the Space Pirate game: It's a great demonstration of the capabilities of Director in the hands of a good programmer. Space Pirate is a neat little game that basically follows the model of the venerable Galactic Trader, except in Space Pirate you get to steal and plunder. You navigate around the galaxy, picking up crew members, buying, stealing, and selling goods, trying to avoid getting arrested or having your crew mutiny. It's fun and, best of all, just a mere 200K Shockwave file. This kind of economy in programming hasn't been seen since the days of 20-megabyte hard drives. That's not the only incredible feat of programming at the site: Have a look at the 60K game called Pretty Good Golf, which actually has three different courses. *–WKC*

Conquest of the New World
http://conquest.interplay.com/

net rave

Advertising has reached new levels with the World Wide Web, putting the same amount of material in front of the consumer as a television infomercial. Interplay has set up the Conquest of the New World site as a way of showing off all the aspects of the game. Using a lot of Shockwave files, it illustrates all the strategy points of the game, such as exploring, trading, lying, and stealing. Each screen covers some aspect of our politically incorrect forefathers' takeover of North America. Beautifully designed, the site is one elegant commercial that even includes a little Shockwave game that really makes you want to play Conquest. *–WKC*

File Factory
http://www.filefactory.com

net rave

Essentially a file archive for the Total Entertainment Network, **http://www.ten.net**, the File Factory is an aesthetically appealing, solid batch of Web pages set up for the sole purpose of making PC gaming files available on the Web. There are, of course, demo versions of the games that can be played on the TEN network. But TEN didn't stop there. These avid gamers put just about every decent game they could

Cutting through all the crap

find, along with a quick rating, up on the site. There are quite a few different categories of downloads, including the "Home Brew" section, with levels and patches designed by individuals. *–WKC*

GamePen
http://www.gamepen.com/

net rave

GamePen is one of those ultimate computer gaming sites that can provide all the resources any gamer needs. People with slow Internet connections that can't really spend the time aimlessly surfing from site to site might as well just go here. The latest games are pretty well covered, along with news about upcoming releases. Another excellent time-saver is the "Therapy" section, a sort of running report covering the dialogue in the various newsgroups that relate to gaming. The top of the home page is a little confusing as far as what's available here; scroll down a bit for an easy-access site map. *–WKC*

Geisen
http://teleparc.com/en/game/geisen/

Ostensibly a site for all those " I-love- games, I-love-to-chat kind of people," it

Meanwhile, in Japan...

seems a little short on participants. Can't blame it on a new launch, because message archives go back to April, not that there's a whole lot of messages there. Geisen is like a big, super-deluxe office building that nobody has rented space in yet. The only content is video game news and a section about a big costume players convention. Judging from the graphics, costume players are all the rage in Japan, where girls dress up as their favorite anime and manga characters. This will probably be a hit for all the teenage male video gamers out there, but don't expect any information about actual games. *–WKC*

Internet Chess Library
http://caissa.onenet.net/chess/

The best way to learn chess is by example, and what better examples are there than Fischer, Smyslov, Karpov, etc.? While not the prettiest site to look at, the ICL is one helluvan archive. A lot of it isn't optimized for HTML. In fact, the majority of the material here is text documents and applications, which can be accessed via the FTP server. (You can, at least, view the file directories with your browser.) Slick graphics shouldn't matter much to the serious chess aficionado, though, who's used to reading chess notation and knows where "e3" is on the board. You will need to learn standard chess notation if you want to re-create any of the tournament and masters games stored here. *–WKC*

Metacrostics
http://www.hypersphere.com/ac/

If you're familiar with acrostics, and enjoy solving the little brain-twisters, then Metacrostics is sure to turn you off of them forever. If you've never cared much for word games, skip to the next section. This site contains a selection of the most out-of-control acrostic-type puzzles I've ever seen. Oh sure, the first page tries to make it sound easy by supplying instructions, but that's just to suck people in. Pretty soon you'll be scratching your head, trying to figure out which five-letter word some weird limerick is defining. The site is well designed with a magazine-like quality, and you'll end up hating it. *–WKC*

Playing Chess On The Internet
http://crux5.cit.cornell.edu/~jmk3/john/chess/

net rave

Maybe you have a yen to play chess with someone hundreds or thousands of miles away, in real time. This site has the information you need, covering all the basics of getting onto one of the many specialized chess servers out

Your move, Kasparov, you lousy cheat

there. Even for the computer- and Internet-savvy among us, this is an excellent resource; if merely for the list of chess servers. The site itself is an example of nice Web page design, employing frames properly (no small feat), and having its information well-organized. *–WKC*

health

The Interactive Therapy Center
http://www.com/itc/

Since you can do just about anything online, it shouldn't be surprising that you can get your head shrunk on the Web as well. In this case, the doctor is John Matthew Dorn, but you can call him Phoenix. He will answer any e-mailed mental health query within 72 hours, charging a flat fee of $45 per question, so choose carefully. The site itself is straightforward, clearly stipulating the type of questions Phoenix is qualified to answer and what you can expect from him, stressing that his service is not a substitute for face-to-face therapy. Now, if he could just rig up a CUSeeMe system. *– ES*

CONTENT	AESTHETIC MERIT	TECHNO SMARTNESS
Runneth over	A looker	Brilliant
Half-empty	Not half bad	Aglow
Dry	A dog	Dim

Dr. Greene's HouseCalls
http://www.drgreene.com/

No he doesn't do housecalls; it's just a cool name for Dr. Alan Greene's Web page. For starters, read the doctor's biography and look at his picture. Doesn't he exude professionalism and warmth wearing that Alan Alda-like sweater? The main section here is the Q&A of the day, where the pediatrician answers questions. His responses contain words like "nitrofurantoin, rimethoprim-sulfamethoxazole, pneumocystis, and Shigella, so he must know his stuff! You can also search previous questions that this very huggable doctor has received. Keep in mind that Dr. Greene can't help parents with children requiring "immediate attention." *–JA*

HealthSite
http://www.atthealthsite.com/

net rave

HealthSite is a composite of six specific health pages, including *Prevention* magazine, *Men's Health,* and *Mayo Health O@sis.* As a site then, it is only as good as its links, which happen to be pretty interesting. *Prevention* is the most fun, with all sorts of interactive health quizzes, stress testers, and nutrition tips, along with tons of useful information. *Men's Health* is equally flashy, although obviously narrower in scope, and *Mayo Health O@sis* is a wealth of information with a useful library section and links to the clinic itself. HealthSite is probably worth a bookmark, offering, as it does, a central platform for all your health-related concerns. *–ES*

Healthwise
http://www.columbia.edu/cu/healthwise

Advice and news on health and wellness brought to you by the Columbia University Health Service. The key attraction here is the Go Ask Alice! section, where people ask questions about anything health-related. You can search questions by topics: Sexuality, Sexual Health, Relationships, Drugs & Alcohol, Fitness & Nutrition, and Emotional Well-Being. Or you can browse the archives by keyword. Healthwise offers refreshingly frank and informative answers to very touchy questions that you could never ask your mother. Or Dear Abby. *–JA*

Hepatitis Information Network
http://www.wp.com/hepatitis/

Who is at risk for getting Hepatitis C and Hepatitis B? Find out here. Anyone interested in Hepatitis will find lots of information. You can read articles from medical journals, find out about upcoming conferences, and see results from an online survey. Although the graphics are rather low key, they're adequate for the job. A quiz also tests your Hepatitis knowledge. *–JA*

International Association of Physicians in AIDS Care
http://www.iapac.org/

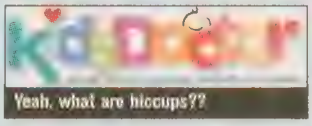
This organization means to educate people. Their mission is to "maximize the survival and quality of life of people with HIV disease." The page is a little overlong on information about the organization, but there is a lot of AIDS information here as well. Use the online search form to find what you're looking for. You can even subscribe to their monthly newsletter. Most of the articles here are their own, with few links to supplement the material. There's also information on upcoming medical conferences, like the one with the unfortunate title, The Third European Chlamydia Meeting. *–JA*

KidsDoctor
http://www.kidsdoctor.com/

This is a great site: well-presented, easy to use, and really packed with information. The doctor will answer any questions you have about childhood ailments, from poison oak to slap-face fever (I'm not making this up). All the explanations and advice are written in a down-home, Dr. Spock sort of style, well-suited to the impish man behind the project, Dr. Lewis L. Coffin, III. Comfortable place to consult with a friendly voice. *–ES*

KidsHealth.org
http://KidsHealth.org/

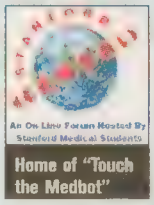
This extensive and informative site is funded by the Nemours Foundation and the I. A. duPont Institute Children's Hospital and provides sections for parents, children, and professionals. The most frequently asked questions are posted along with in-depth, easy - to - understand explanations. An extremely useful Question



Index allows kids to get answers to questions like "What are hiccups?" and "What is AIDS?" with a simple click. And parents can read diagnoses of everything from hyperactivity to Tourette Syndrome. Easy to use, KidsHealth.org has enough graphics, color, and digestible text to be interesting and helpful for children, and enough real information to be a serious resource for parents and professionals. *–ES*

MedWorld
http://www-med.stanford.edu/MedSchool/MedWorld/

net rave



Sponsored by the Stanford Medical Alumni Association and created entirely by medical students, MedWorld is the one-stop shop for medical news and feature stories. The project boasts readable articles, true-life medical stories, and a section for physician diaries. The design is zine-like and well-structured. Doctors, med students, nurses, and other medical personnel can get a free home page here. "Touch the MedBot" to search medical topics. *–JA*

Radiation Experiments Final Report
http://www.ohre.doe.gov/cur/achre/report.html

This site is one product of the final report from the Advisory Committee on Human Radiation Experiments. The Committee was formed by President Clinton in 1993, mandated "to review experiments conducted between 1944 and 1974, and was asked to determine the ethical and scientific standards by which to evaluate the pre-1974 experiments and the extent to which these experiments were consistent with such standards." Tall order. The report offers historical perspectives on human subject research, detailed explanation of the tests in question in the form of case studies, and an overview of contemporary and future projects. *–ES*

humanities

Biography.com
http://www.biography.com/

Based on A & E's excellent television show, the Biography Web site is pure mind candy for those enthralled by other people's pasts. Speak out about Biography subjects like Rush Limbaugh and Jerry Lewis in the "Speak" bulletin board section. Then, test your knowledge in the Anagram Game or Biography Quiz. (Who was the U. S. engineer who, in 1852, developed a lift that incorporated a safety device, making it acceptable for passenger use in skyscrapers? Tune in to Biography to find out.) Biography.com is an educational complement, rather than a boring advertisement, for a fine television show. *–DP*

Bucknell Russian Studies
http://www.bucknell.edu/departments/russian/

If news coverage of the recent Russian elections left you more confused than enlightened about the country's current political situation, this site should sort it out for you. In addition to a Political Orientation Map showing the major candidates' philosophical positions in relation to one another, you'll find polling data and a post-election analysis. The Russian Materials page takes you to a wide range of other Russia resources, providing links to sites focused on everything from art and architecture to Russian feminism and space research. Bucknell Russian Studies is a great stop if you're researching Russian subjects but don't know where to start. *–SS*

Chinese History Virtual Library
http://www.cnd.org/fairbank/

Covering Chinese history from 1644 to the present, the Fairbank Library draws material from disparate sources to produce a rounded, if not necessarily complete, portrait of each era. The Qing Dynasty section, for example, includes general historical outlines, a discussion of opium in China, and images of antique snuff bottles. If your interest in China is casual, head for the bits of social history. One that neatly turns the tables on Western representations of China is a European travelogue written by a Chinese tourist, which contains this factoid: "America is a small, isolated island in the middle of the ocean." The British must have told him that. *–SS*

Discoverer's Web
http://huizen.dds.nl/~engels/discovery/

net rave

What a task Andre Engels has undertaken! The goal of his text-only site is to "gather all kinds of information found on the Web about voyages of discovery and exploration." And he is off to a heavy-duty start. Organized by time periods and geographic region, Discoverer's Web is a massive list of links to both FTP and Web resources devoted to everyone from Herodotus to Samuel de Champlain. Let's hope this man has a T-1 line. *–DP*

Extropians
http://www.c2.org/~arkuat/extr/

Extropians, in case you didn't know, believe in the ascendancy of human beings and the ultimate triumph over pesky things like mortality and the confines of the body. It is a way of thinking that marries the optimism of technology with the mysticism of religion, and this site is thick with a weird breed of newspeak that is part techno jargon, part mystical incantantation. It makes

American Museum of Natural History

http://www.amnh.org/

net SITE of the MONTH Nov 96

There's no use in denying it anymore: I scored just under 50 percent on the Sci-Q Quiz in the Museum's Education segment. I'd like to claim that the questions were all tricks and that I'd been duped, but what good would it do me? Might as well face facts: When it comes to the sciences, I'm just plain ignorant. As such, this resource did me a world of good, packed as it is with fascinating information, all beautifully presented.

At the home page be sure to move your mouse along the row of colorful icons in the heading. You'll get concise definitions of the various disciplines that the icons represent and which fall under the Museum's purview. It's a quick, graceful way to get a sense for the breadth of the subject before venturing further. For the accursed Sci-Q Quiz click on Education. As of this writing, it's the only feature in the section, but they promise to include more activities and resources soon. Under Research, the curious will find information about the Museum's various projects, facilities, and expeditions, featuring an intriguing aside on paleontologists at work in the Gobi desert. The About the Museum bit is primarily for New Yorkers or lucky folks planning a visit to the actual Museum, located along Central Park West. Transportation information, schedules, and a searchable exhibition calendar are all available.

Which brings us to the heart and soul of any museum: the exhibits. The pages devoted to the exhibition, "Amber: A Window to the Past," are riveting. Amber is a tree resin renowned for its use in making jewelry and other cultural artifacts, which is important to scientists as an astonishing natural preservative of small organisms such, as prehistoric insects.

Of course, you can't mention the Museum of Natural History without also mentioning dinosaurs. You'll find them here in "Fossil Halls," an exhibit that traces the development and family relationships of vertebrates. Frames-capable browsers produce a clickable, expanding hierarchy to lead visitors through an excellent, if rather involved, tutorial on everything from dinosaur mandibles to prehensile forefeet; you could spend hours here alone. In fact, the interesting features go on and on, from sidebars like "Personalities in Paleontology" to mainstays like "Treasures from 125 Years of Discovery," where you can browse some of the more notable fixtures from the permanent collection.

Be on the lookout for interactive elements in any and all of the displays, such as the timeline along the rings of an ancient sequoia trunk. It's an entertaining diversion, which will doubtless help increase your knowledge.

Come to think of it, you should probably look around a while, *then* take the quiz. But, of course, that won't leave you with any excuses. *–PJ*

Steppin' out in style

Net nirvana for clothing addicts, the Costume Site is a wide-ranging collection of links to resources supplying costume designers and others with images, historical information, and instructional guides. Look at everything from Andean textiles to get ups from the TV series "Battlestar Galactica." Trace the history of the corset, worn as early as 1600 BC by Minoan women, and the codpiece, invented in the 1400s to cover male genitalia exposed by short tunics and hose ending at the upper thighs. Find out how to make kilts, Japanese chain armor, and medieval footwear. If people have worn it, there's probably a Web site devoted to it. *–SS*

The Mariners' Museum

http://www.mariner.org/

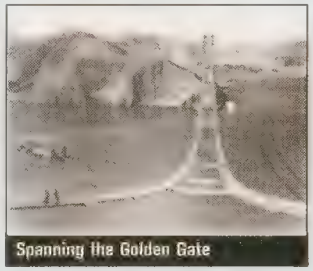
Ah, the romance of the sea. Oh, the blandness of the Mariner's Museum site. You'll find plenty of information about the museum and its holdings here, but no exhibits or samples–even from the photography collection, surely a relatively easy one to excerpt online. What few images there are seem intended mainly as decoration. The "little-known maritime facts" are dry bits of history, and the research library accepts requests only by regular mail (there is an e-mail connection for photographic services). Even as an online brochure, this Web effort is too lightweight. *–SS*

The Museum of the City of San Francisco

http://www.sfmuseum.org/

net rave

Even if you've never stepped foot in California, I guarantee you'll find something worthwhile in these pages devoted to the City of Saint Francis. I spent far too long in the section called The Chronology of San Francisco Rock, following links to all corners of the Web. But that's just one small part of this impressive electronic exhibit. The site features both original materials (from the museum staff and archives) as well as links to resources all over the Web. The contents are organized by date or subject, covering a broad spectrum of the city's illustrious past. So whether you're just out for some idle surfing or some Bay Area history, this one comes highly recommended. *–PJ*



Spanning the Golden Gate

for a bemusing read. Some of my favorite lexical concoctions: "pancritical epistemology," and "neurochemical enhancers." And though the creator of the site swears that extropians are "never, ever dogmatic," the overall tenor was vaguely Maoist, with good communist-type sloganeering, like "transformation over torpor." No images, lots of text, almost all of it hyper-linked and cross-referenced. *–PJ*

MacTutor History of Mathematics

http://www-groups.dcs.st-and.ac.uk/~history/

Number crunchers take note: the MacTutor History of Mathematics from the School of Mathematical and Computational Sciences University of St. Andrews in Scotland is a comprehensive guide to the fascinating (seriously!) history of mathematics. Check out bios of more than 1000 famous mathematicians by name or time period, deep background on the development of important mathematical ideas, and even articles about famous curves. The Devil's Curve is my fave, although I don't remember it from high school. I knew I should have taken calculus. *–DP*

Nineveh Online

http://www.nineveh.com/

net rave

Nineveh Online is a site devoted to promoting Assyrian culture. Prior to visiting this excellent resource, my knowledge of Assyria was vague at best. I now have a few more associations to work with. One of the world's ancient civilizations, Assyria is today a loosely scattered entity of some three million people living mainly in Iraq and elsewhere, as refugees. Akin to the Kurds insofar as they both lack a sovereign homeland, Assyrians are generally Christian and speak their own language, often called Syriac. You can learn much more at this site, a kind of homeland in cyberspace. There is a BBS, as well as pages devoted to kids, women, the Assyrian language, food, amnesty issues, and more. *–PJ*

The Costume Site

http://ddi.digital.net/~milieux/costume.html

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Runneth over	A looker	Brilliant
Half-empty	Not half bad	Aglow
Dry	A dog	Dim

kids

A Bullet Can't Kill a Dream
http://www.digitalrag.com/iqbal/iqbal.html

A moving demonstration of how kids can make a difference in the lives of others, A Bullet Can't Kill a Dream outlines the short, tragic life of Iqbal Masih and the efforts of a Massachusetts middle school to help realize his vision. Iqbal, a Pakistani boy who escaped forced labor at age 10, spoke out worldwide against child slavery and in favor of schools. He was murdered last spring. Broad Meadows Middle School students have started a School for Iqbal Fund and launched a letter-writing campaign for an investigation into his death. The site tells kids how to get involved with both projects. *–SS*

ACE Kids
http://www.acekids.com/bkground.html

A well-organized base site for students who want to explore the net, ACE (Academic Center for Excellence) Kids provides links to and brief descriptions of kids' Web pages, as well as lists of U.S. and Japanese school Web sites and links to child-appropriate resources in categories such as games, research, and sports. Homework Helper matches up students for peer tutoring, and ACE Kids Lit. publishes short stories by budding writers. Hopefully they won't use this site as a prose model, or by the time they're adults the English language could be reduced to one word: cool. *–SS*

Cool Writers' Magazine
http://www.halcyon.com/ahcool/home.html

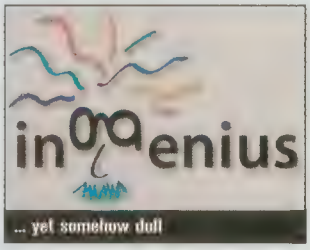
This is the Webzine of Seattle's Arbor Heights elementary school. Designed by a teacher and perpetually under construction, these pages tap into the Web's revolutionary educational potential. By uploading poems, essays, and stories, students are taught both to express and consider themselves in a global context. Cross-linking among schools is encouraged, and you, dear reader, are invited to send writing. They've got stuff from all over the world on their server. There are also links to other nodes in the Arbor Heights community, like the Jr. Seahawk Newspaper, as well as a list of links for educators needing technological guidance. *–AN*

Eeeek-Net!
http://www.eeeek.com/

Eeeek-Net is a California-based e-zine for kids. Cartoon icons and frames organize a wide variety of informative and playful games and articles. On the statistics page, for instance, you'll learn that the human body contains enough iron to make a 3-inch nail. Elsewhere you can read a piece about Nevada's mysterious Area 51, or learn how a mischievous parson invented the story of George Washington and the cherry tree. The crossword puzzles would be a lot more fun as an interactive Java applet, and the frames require adjustment. Nevertheless, there's plenty here to keep a kid curious. *–AN*

Ingenius
http://www.ingenius.com/

Aside from a few games, this site is strictly a sales pitch for Ingenius' information products: What on Earth, a weekly multi-



media news journal for kids ages 8 to 14, and Ask A.N.D.I.E., an information-retrieval tool allowing students and others to pull material on specific subjects from more than 20 wire services. The company also runs Cyberhood, where kids can publish their artwork, poetry, and letters. If you're considering a purchase, you may find what you need to know here; otherwise, don't bother. *–SS*

Just for Kids
http://aone.com/~mrbill/kids.html

net rave

This visually delightful page does a fantastic job of reviewing Web sites produced by and for kids, ages 18 and under. Every week, those of the highest caliber receive Digby's "Four-Paws" Award for Excellence. The ones that I saw were stylishly designed and ideally suited to kids who want to connect with each other. A select few, like Katie Prunka's Pooh Pages, prove that some of the most charming design is coming from the minds of 7th graders. In building this page Webmaster Bill Earles has added rare value to the Internet. You can join him by nominating your favorite sites. *–AN*

Kids on the Internet
http://www.the-hermes.net/~ljh/

"I am 12 years old, and not some company, so I would know what kids like and want," the president of Kids on the Internet (KOTI) confidently claims, and who am I to argue? Much of the site was under construction when I visited, but planned features include Kid Surf, a hand-picked (see above) list of sites accompanied by brief reviews; Sound Off, an e-zine filled with kids' writing; e-mail pal match-ups; and a guide to Internet chat conventions. KOTI could be the start of a kid-created online community. *–SS*

The Field Museum
http://www.bvis.uic.edu/museum/Home.html

Chicago's venerable Field Museum of Natural History has created an online learning environment. The Life Over Time exhibit lets viewers watch MPEG animations of a triceratops and other creatures running across prehistoric ranges, as well as read illustrated descriptions of dinosaur dining habits. A link on the exhibit pages takes teachers to a set of classroom activities using information from the exhibit. Elsewhere on the site, older students and adults can read about a Field archaeologist's potentially path-breaking work on early human cultures in the Amazon Basin. Hopefully, other museums will take note. *–SS*

Uncle Bob's Kid Page
http://gagme.wwa.com/~boba/kids.html

net rave

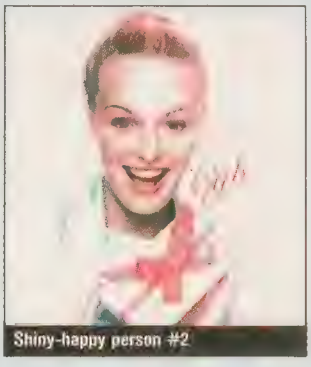
This groovy-looking page hosts a long and diverse list of annotated links to Web sites deemed "safe" for kids' consumption. Rows of animated smiley faces divide the page's various sections, rendering the act of scrolling an exercise in hilarity that won't be soon forgotten. Parents and kids alike may be surprised to find such a wide range of sites that are "appropriate" for the entire family. Trivia, pets, puppets, sports, games, art, and everything in between is covered by Bob Allison's discerning eye. If you're a kid with some time to browse, I'd check this out immediately. *–AN*

lifestyles

AcronTech
http://www.acrontech.com/

Computers may be valuable tools, but what if you can't read the words on your screen? AcronTech manufactures products to increase the independence of visually impaired people. Their products include large-print and speech-synthesizer software applications, audible sign technology, and portable video magnifiers. While the AcronTech Web site is primarily an expanded company brochure, it's in everyone's best interest to know that these kinds of products are available for the people who need them. *Equal* access to information is what the New Edge is all about. *–DP*

Beautylink
http://www.beautylink.com/



Kind of an online *Glamour* meets *Seventeen* magazine, The Beautylink tries to camp it up enough to make its departments enjoyable, but comes off kind of hokey all the same. What should you expect from a site promising to link you up with all the beauty the Web has offer? "Cyberteena" provides helpful hints for the under 21 crowd, Angora Teasdale can give you a makeover in the Looks section, and Blade Shearson ("I make you look gorgeous!") offers useful info in the Cyberspa. If the whole project makes you ask, "Is Fashion Silly?" there's a link to a site by that name that's pretty interesting. *–ES*

Campaign for Our Children
http://www.cfoc.org/

Campaign for Our Children is a not-for-profit organization dedicated to reducing the number of teen pregnancies in this

country. According to the site, a U.S. teenager becomes pregnant every 26 seconds. That's a lot of babies having babies. Good parent and teacher resources are available on this site, and the campaign's slogans are poignant without being naive–example: "A baby costs $474 a month, how much is your allowance?" While their call for abstinence may not be realistic, almost anyone urging kids and parents to *talk* about sex is OK in my book. *–DP*

Food TV
http://www.foodtv.com/index.htm

For all you can stomach in recipes, restaurant reviews, culinary tips, and products that you just *can't* live without, visit the Food TV Network Web site. Missed the latest how-to from Debbie Fields'–of "Mrs. Field's Cookies" fame–Desert Show or The Essence of Emeril? Ingredient lists are here for the browsing. And if you're a recipe fetishist, there are also plenty of cookbooks from Food TV show hosts advertised on the site. You can even buy a fancy kitchen knife endorsed by the Food Network. No, it's not a Ginsu. *–DP*

Jewish Domestic Abuse and Agunah Problem Web Page
http://users.aol.com/agunah/index.htm

In Jewish religious law, according to the home page, an Agunah is "a woman who

is prevented from remarrying, either because of the disappearance of her husband, absent proof of his death, or because of his refusal to grant her a "get" ("bill of divorcement", or religious divorce). This site, maintained by a law student at the University of Wisconsin, Madison, was designed as a resource for Agunot (plural of Agunah) and Jewish women suffering from all kinds of domestic abuse. The site offers articles, information about resource organizations for victims, excerpts from Jewish family law, and first-person accounts. Not a pleasant subject for a Web site, but definitely an important one. *–DP*

Kosher Living
http://www.kashrus.org/kosher.html

net rave

Whether or not you're Jewish and Kosher, this is a useful site. Packed with information on permissible foods, preparation, and the history and nature of Kashrus, Kosher Living serves as an in-depth introduction to the principles behind Kosher laws, and is a helpful guide for those who practice them.

The site is brought to you from the director of the Asian-American Kashrus, Singapore-born Rabbi Meyer, who is not surprised that the general public knows little about the history and culture of Asian Jews. So he's made it easy to learn by providing an interactive map of Asia, with an informative essay attached to each country. Also check out Asian Kosher Recipes and links to other Kosher sites. *–ES*

Naked Magazine
http://www.crl.com/~nakedmag/nakedmag.html

Naked is a magazine for men who like to get naked. "Nudists, exhibitionists, and voyeurs use Naked as a forum of expression of their lifestyle." So what we're talking about here is a site that tells gay and bi men where to take it off and how to locate others who are equally clothing-oppressed. You can find out about a Caribbean cruise (limited to 110 naked guys), check out personal ads, view nude models, and learn about nude organizations and getaway spots. The Naked Video sample was a total tease, however, and despite heavy perseverance, never loaded. *–ES*

NetNoir
http://www.netnoir.com/index.html

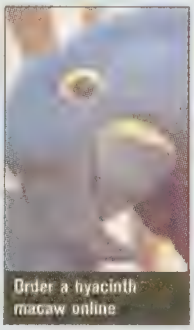
net rave

A site for anyone from any walk of life who is interested in Afrocentric culture, NetNoir Online combines a variety of

sections–Spotlight, Lifestyle, Community, and Empowerment–with search engines and great links to related sites. The site is beautifully designed and packed with content, providing visitors with articles on everything from hip hop to investment opportunities. The self-declared "Soul of Cyberspace," NetNoir seeks to build an online community while informing visitors about local events, outstanding personalities, entertainment, technology news, and resources. *–ES*

Petbird.com
http://www.upatsix.com/

I never understood the appeal of pet birds. They pretty much just hang out on a little swing, crap all over the place, and sing if you're lucky. But who am I to judge? For many, pet birds are the cat's meow, and this site is for them. Read up on cockatiel breeding and genetics and finch care. Avian professionals are all over this site offering wise words about your bird's needs. There's even a section on aviculture called F.Y.I, with a fun article on how to prepare your bird for a show. (For one, file their beaks if necessary.) Tired of your whiteface cockatiel hen? Find a buyer in the Petbird classified section. And, of course, buy your bird seed online from one of the merchants on the site. *–DP*



Urban Jungle
http://members.aol.com/getwizdom/ub1.html

Jesus H. Christ! Hip hop clothes with a bible bent?!? Yes, that's right. Urban Jungle is a Christian underground clothing company "creating Bible inspired urban fashion for you." For only $10.00, you can be the first in your congregation to sport a "Stompin 4 Christ N Yo Front Yard" t-shirt. But Urban Jungle is not just about clothes. The company was also created "to help you connect with the dopest underground holy hip-hop music there is." Word. Those hymns would be kickin' with a break beat behind the choir. Yo. This is not a joke. *–DP*

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Half-empty	Not half bad	Aglow
Dry	A dog	Dim

Women's Wire

http://www.women.com/work/

SITE of the MONTH Nov 96

Call me doctrinaire, but I assume that a Web site that devotes itself to women should have some kind of critical line. I mean, *Women's World* and *Women's Day*, whose editorial policies don't raise too many hackles, claim to cover women-type stuff: recipes, child-rearing, fashion, career v. family. But how many women feel these magazines really speak to them? Women's Wire is somewhere in that same supermarket vein, albeit a tad more progressive.

Divided into seven clearly identified sections, the site focuses exclusively on women. The News section offers headlines that directly concern women, without, unfortunately providing links to comprehensive news sites, so that women can catch up on the larger picture while they're at it. And, although the "Go Vote 1996" tag links to Lifetime's Election page, a substantive discussion of how election issues effect women is missing. Moving on to category number two, Style gives an indication of where the site's creators are coming from. A debate over whether or not blondes have more fun is about as hackneyed as it gets, and the links to fashion houses comprise the rest of the offerings.

Other sections present themselves more effectively. There are useful features in the Work section that profile professional women and rank 100 of the best companies for working mothers, based on pay rates, promotion, and childcare practices. But the consumer information available seems overshadowed by a lurking corporate presence, as in the Leasing v. Financing comparison, brought to you by Ford.

The Body area deals with health and fitness, offering some unbiased information, unaffiliated with any products and brought to you by the National Women's Health Resource Center.

Check out the Cash page for some decent investment advice, with tips on how to store away funds for the house, vacation, or grad school you've been dreaming about. In the Women's Wire Web area, there are some very sound articles about breaking into writing for TV, how to become a Webmistress, multimedia producer, environmentalist, etc. And last of all, an obligatory shopping link. I can't decide if I'm put off by this inclusion. Consumerism is not a gender-based thing, but do men's sites link to shopping pages? Probably.

Ultimately, everyone is looking for something special in gender or ethnic-specific sites, and no, you can't please everyone. I was just a little disappointed to see many of the same old "women's magazine" angles trotted out as if there were no alternative. The Who We Are section lacks an editorial statement, a conspicuous omission in a such a subject-specific publication. *–ES*

literature

Gertrude Stein Memorial Web Site
http://www.magibox.net/~stein/

The Gertrude Stein Memorial Web site is more of a digital tombstone than an exploration of this author's legacy and

influence. There is no discussion of her bibliography, no timeline or context, no links. Nothing. Everything that you'd think a site about an author might need is absent. Instead of anything relevant, we have a brief (very brief) paragraph about Ms. Stein's pigeon wallpaper that decorated her Paris home in the 1930s. Why disrespect the matriarch of the Lost Generation, mentor to Hemingway and Fitzgerald? This site is a crime against literature. Better to have your works rotting on the dusty shelves of an obscure library than to be eulogized by a tiny Internet blip that says more about your interior decoration than your writing. *–DA*

Unofficial Henry Miller
http://www.csis.gvsu.edu/~vanoflej/HenryMiller/

Novels are not the cultural weather vanes they used to be. Back when they were, a new Henry Miller novel signaled storms up ahead. In 1938, his novel *Tropic of Cancer* was released in the States, sparking over 60 lawsuits, challenging America to rethink its assumptions about morality and sexuality. The Unofficial Henry Miller site explores the legacy of this iconoclast, who reveled in the decadent absurdity of modern life, who celebrated the spectacle as he pushed the boundaries of what was "iproper," and who reluctantly became an icon in his own right. The essays are almost overwhelming in their scope and length, but well worth the read. Considering that most of his life Miller published clandestinely to avoid suppression, the bibliography is surprisingly exhaustive. The related links are also helpful, providing a more complete picture of censorship in America, grouping other banned works by author, subject matter, date, legal action taken, etc. U.H.M is an excellent place to learn a little about literature and how an artist can challenge a culture to expand its horizons. *–DA*

Epistrophy: Jazz in 20th Century Literature
http://ie.uwindsor.ca/jazz/

The relationship between jazz and the written word has been a creative tension since day one. Jazz, with its improvised, headstrong ambition and its vast emotional palette, has pushed authors of poetry and prose to explore new possibilities in their own medium. This site celebrates that artistic edge from all angles: the poetry of Langston Hughes, the scholarly essays of jazz historians, the frenetic prose of Kerouac. Amira Bakira examines the famed days of Minton's Playhouse at 134th St. in Harlem. Charles Mingus translates his musical ethos into a prose style all his own in excerpts from his autobiography *Beneath the Underdog*. Still under construction, look for more on the revolutionary free jazz/poetry of the late 1960s, and hopefully, more sound. *–DA*

F. Scott Fitzgerald Centennial
http://www.sc.edu/fitzgerald/index.html

net rave

The University of South Carolina clearly has a special relationship with famed author F. Scott Fitzgerald, housing the second-largest collection of his original texts and memorabilia (Princeton, his alma mater, is first). This site is a loving tribute to the author of *The Great Gatsby*, and worth a visit to anyone interested in American literature. Information is well-organized and accessible, the graphics appropriately muted, reflecting the glamorous tragedy of Scott and Zelda's short lives. Don't miss the essay entitled "Princess Daily," which describes Sylvia Plath's margin scribblings and underlinings of *The Great Gatsby*. *–RS*

Labyrinth
http://www.georgetown.edu/labyrinth/labyrinth-home.html

Labyrinth, a World Wide Web server for medieval studies sponsored by Georgetown University, is not for the faint of heart, or tongue. If you don't speak and/or read the medieval form of some romance language, don't bother visiting. The authors of the site's stated goal is to put medieval works online, and their intended audience is clearly scholars, not amateurs. They don't even offer translations into modern English, French, or German for the lightweights among us. *–RS*

Simon Says
http://www.simonsays.com/

net rave

Simon Says is Simon and Schuster's slick new home on the net. Designed by Razorfish, this site has a sleek, modern look and is easy to navigate, with spiffy technological touches (RealAudio, multimedia product demos, rotating billboards). The focus of the site is on the reader, though, with lots of opportunities for interactivity. Reader reviews, bulletin board, and chats are all features that try to attract repeat visitors. Of special note are the Reading Groups, monthly discussions on general subjects led by experienced facilitators. Design and content touches like these elevate this site from the merely corporate to a lively hub for book lovers. *–RS*

The Swagazine Rack
http://mrlinux.durand.com/clark/swagazine/

net rave

Santa Barbara-area poets and writers bare their souls online. Swagazine was born from a BBS; back in the good old days, it seems the various contributors shared messages of such considerable talent that they decided to pool their efforts, take on the world, and start an Internet publication. Or so the story goes. Anyway, it's nearly three years later, and there are two completed issues to show for it. The collected writings are sometimes entertaining, sometimes exasperating, and generally a lot better than average. Be sure to have a look at The Internet Insult Contest: Funny as hell. Every writer has got a handle dating back to the now defunct BBS and an attitude to match. A new issue should be out in late September or October. It's worth checking out. *–DA*

The Valley of Fear
http://home.earthlink.net/~dmoore

Welcome to the Valley of Fear, one fan's tribute to Sherlock Holmes and his creator, Sir Arthur Conan Doyle. (*Valley of Fear* is a title of one of the author's books.) Trim in content, this site contains bibliographies of Doyle's books and stories that star the great deductive reasoner, and a few links to related sites. Worth a peek if you're looking for a clue about Holmes and Doyle, but way too skimpy for a bookmark. *–DP*

Virtual Emily
http://www-unix.oit.umass.edu/~emilypg/index1.html

net rave

Emily Dickinson, one of the more enigmatic figures in American literature, has her life deconstructed by the curators of Virtual Emily. With ample respect for the poet and the circumstances in which she created her art, V.E. offers any newcomer to Dickinson the background they will need to understand her truly remarkable contribution to modern poetry. The primary offering is a chronological biography that divides her life into periods of productivity, depression, hope, and seclusion. The essays for each period are well-written and informative, supplemented by photographs of the poet and her family, and even diagrams of her homestead in Amherst. There are also links to the works that made her posthumously famous. *–DA*

Word Salad
http://www.interpath.net/~whealton/wordsalad.html

Word Salad is an online poetry quarterly. This homespun site is not a graphic masterpiece but has clearly been crafted by people who appreciate the written word. Each quarterly edition is made up of 20t o 30 poems, submitted by interested parties, and a Featured Artist Profile, with a biography and selected work of the author. The poetry ranges from short, rhymed verse to longer musings on life. There is something here for all types of poetry aficionados, and a genuine feeling of community. *–RS*

media

Cops
http://www.tvcops.com/

Let me just come right out and say it: I hate "Cops," the TV show, and the Web site did nothing to change that. It's more (but not much more) of the same: smug attitude, lame glorifications, and shameless exploitations of the worst in humanity. There is a whopping total of eight short Quicktime videos on the site as of this writing, including four deemed "Too Hot for TV." Unless you're scandalized by gratuitous boob shots and drawn shotguns, I hardly think you'll be impressed. In case you are, the video tapes are on sale at the site, along with sundry other related merchandise. The only other segment is the FAQ, which is not really a FAQ but an archived online chat with John Langley, one of the show's proud creators. Here's a sample exchange. Q: "When I got arrested, the "Cops" crew were filming in Dallas. How good of a chance do you think there is that I will be on the show?" A: "I hope you are on it. Good luck." It's enough to make you sick. *–PJ*

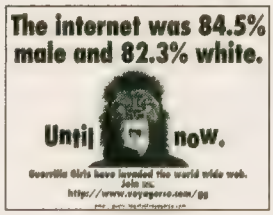
Epicurious
http://www.epicurious.com/a_home/a00_home/home.html

net rave

Catering (pun intended) to the tastes (again) of an insignificant little niche market described only as "people who eat," Epicurious will probably cause much slobbering and drooling and smacking of lips. If, while visiting Epicurious, your considerable drool short-circuits the keyboard, don't say you weren't warned. Look around a little bit and you'll encounter the recipes of famous chefs and four-star restaurants, restaurant reviews, and a guide to the best eateries in 10 major U.S. cities. Also, kitchen hints, ideas for entertaining, wine expertise, nutrition data, contests, a dozen user forums, and much more. Better tuck a napkin into your collar before browsing. *–GB*

Voyager Company

http://www.voyagerco.com



Sure there are a lot of *Pulp Fiction* sites on the Web, but none that compare to this one. The slick, professional graphics seem to float up off the white background like hovercrafts. The content is uncluttered and thorough, including speculation from various Internet users about the contents of the briefcase, Tarantino's influences, trivia from the movie that.... Oh, wait a minute. This is a review about the Voyager Company site; I got a little sidetracked in the *Pulp Fiction* section, heh heh.

Now then, Voyager's site is one of the paragons of good Web design, with a home page that's updated daily and content based on a plethora of projects in all kinds of media formats, from interactive CD-ROM titles to laser disc and video collections, and ... well, Web design.

Voyager's work reveals educated and eclectic tastes. A list of its projects reads like a roll call for the avant garde: Laurie Anderson's Green Room, Art Spiegelman's Maus, and the digital version of inmate Mumia Abu-Jamal's *Live from Death Row*. Voyager keeps CD-ROMs from becoming passé. Movie buffs should know about Voyager's Criterion Collection, a compendium of classic and contermporary films on laser disc.

Even if you don't have a player, the site is worth browsing for its considerable content, with excellent pages devoted to each director in the series.

To its credit, Voyager also hosts projects that don't have anything to do with selling products. Consider the Guerrilla Girls site, devoted to a group of feminist artists with a biting sense of satire. A poster they produced for the 1992 Republican convention bore the heading "Republicans do believe in a women's right to control her own body!" underscored with images of nose jobs, liposuction, and breat implants. Clearly, this is a company that isn't afraid to offend.

Also hosted by Voyager are two eminent literary journals, *The Paris Review* and *Grand Street*. Here you'll find exceptional poetry, fiction, and interviews (with Dennis Hopper, *Grand Street*, August '96), not to mention more, Quentin Tarantino. The online issue publishes only excerpts from the print version, but it's still a great source of free content. Also be sure to check in for a preview of Narrative Corpse, an experimental, comix-style "chain story by 69 artists," the results of which are positively weird, if not exactly exquisite.

In the end, this company is involved in things too numerous to mention. But one thing is for sure: The Voyager imprint is a reliable mark of quality content and design. *–WKC*

Intelligent Agent
http://www.intelligent-agent.com/

net rave

I.A. is a monthly New York-based newsletter reporting on the use of interactive media and technology in arts and education. With backgrounds in hypertext theory, literature, and interface design, its writers are hardwired for illuminating emergent areas of communication. Print articles are archived alongside site-specific projects. Offering brief descriptions, the table of contents ushers you into intense hyperlinked interviews, essays, reviews, and exhibitions on subjects ranging from internet copyright to distance education and DNA-based art. A subtle balance between form and content makes I.A. a site for sore eyes and minds alike. They'll even mail you a free newsletter. *–AN*

Internet News Radio
http://www.iNewsRadio.com/inr/

net rave

With minimalistic design redolent of German engineering, iNR inspires confidence in its services before you've even sampled a sound. With a 14.4+ connection and a RealAudio plug-in, you can stream weekly real-time stories of relevance to the internet and the related telecommunications and technologies industries. A special feature currently reports from the The Fourth International World Wide Web Conference. iNR also hosts a beautifully designed subsite of "irreverent" film reviews and interviews from Hollywood. As streaming technology improves, iNR is poised to stay at the forefront of Webcasting. *–AN*

MSNBC
http://www.msnbc.com

net rave

Sure, Bill Gates is a subterranean nudnick and his company, Microsoft, hopes someday to supplant motherhood and apple pie in our affections. But consarn it, MSNBC isn't half bad. Putting aside for the moment the question of its credibility as a reliable source of accurate and unbiased information, MSNBC is pretty to look at, and there's no denying it uses an awful lot of words, the bulk of which are updated frequently. Still, it's very sad that so much of our news is filtered through giants like Time-Warner, Disney, Microsoft, Westinghouse, and General Electric. Aside from the unfortunate lineage, though, MSNBC rocks. *–GB*

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Runneth over	A looker	Brilliant
Half-empty	Not half bad	Aglow
Dry	A dog	Dim

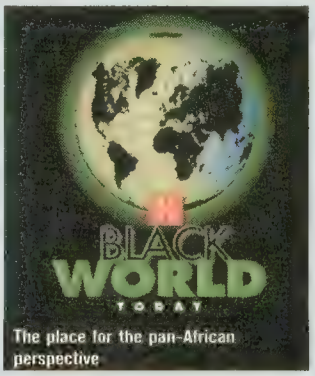
SEE Worldwide
http://www.tic.ab.ca/SEE/

The utterance "eh?" in response to the SEE Worldwide site is not an anti-Canuck jab so much as a comment on the overall dreariness of this alternative newsweekly from Edmonton, Alberta. The print rag is probably a lot more interesting (I don't know), but the online edition is singularly uninspired. There's a lot of information here (lagging a bit behind its newsstand weekly status), and the writing is wacky and irreverent. But the presentation of the mateiral practically defines "lackluster." One potential Brownie Point: In a brilliant stroke of irony, their "In the Web" column is apparently not available online. *–GB*

The Black World Today
http://www.tbwt.com/index2.htm

net rave

T.B.W.T. aims "to be the one 'must stop' in cyberspace for Blacks the world over: a place where they can come each day to feed their minds and souls with uplifting information and inspiration, a place to meet and chat with each other and to engage in commerce." With sophisticated design and knowing reportage, T.B.W.T. seems prepared to realize its ambitions. Here you'll find cogent politico-economic and cultural analysis from a pan-African perspective, complemented by historical and geographical profiles of black countries and achievers. Furthermore, embedded Webchat and



a classifieds section give this site a promising degree of interactivity. *–AN*

Uncover Web
http://www.carl.org/uncover/

net rave

CARL unCover purports to be an "online article delivery service, a table of contents database, and a keyword index to nearly 17,000 periodicals." This Web site is one of several available ways to access the CARL unCover database, which includes more than 7 million articles in English, with 5,000 more added each day. Searches are free, but ordering the full text of an article will set you back $8.50 plus a copyright royalty fee. Or, for $20 a year, the bibliographic results of your prescribed search strategy will be e-mailed to you on a regular basis. *–GB*

Zomboy
http://www.netdoor.com/com/inferno/zomboy/

Minneapolis-based comics artist Thomas Florimonte has inked, he says, for some of the best pencilers in the business. Greater ambitions have led him to combine his writing and inking talents in the creation of Zomboy. Here you can read about Florimonte's self-actualizing revelation and page through the first issue of his colorful comic, which is out in stores this summer. The book's art and story are dictated by the misadventurous impulses of a pubescent kid, and since there's no shortage of them in the world, Zomboy should be a big success. You can order an autographed copy from the artist. *–AN*

music

8 Bold Souls
http://www.suba.com/~ltipxred/

Well, this is apparently intended as a promotional site for an assembly of veteran musicians called 8 Bold Souls. Technical problems abound, and half the souls have their bio pages under construction. I wanted to learn something about Black Herman, "World's Famous Zulu Magician," who gave 8 Bold Souls his official endorsement, but, alas, it was not to be. His URL was also not to be found, but maybe that's because he's currently performing his "most noted miracle, the 'human seed,' buried six feet under, deprived of air and dependent on the teachings of the ancient yogis..." I swear I'm not making any of this up. *–ES*

International Saxophone Home
http://www.saxophone.org/

A combination magazine, clearinghouse, and buying guide, the International Saxophone home hage is *the* most happening place online for horn players. Read an interview with Steve Coleman before trying out "Close Multiphonic Harmonies for Alto Saxophone." Then, click to the "Vintage Saxophone Page" for a history of Selmer Saxophones, or play a game that tests your vintage sax knowledge. Well-maintained with lots of content and no signs of hot air. Or Kenny G. *–DP*

Internet Music World
http://www.mw3.com/imw

This is a no-frills Webzine targeting music-related people who need to stay Web savvy. Articles in the most current issue (Winter 96) run the gamut from *Internet for Dummies*-type explanations to industry CEOs' take on music and the Web. It all seems a little stale. The most dynamic part of the site is its link to Baudway Communications Music Interactive page, which makes a more concrete and interesting connection between music technology and its Web applications. *–ES*

Kora Connections
http://www.drive.net/kora.htm

The traditional Mandinka musicians of the Gambia, often called "griots" or "jalis," have long been an integral part of their culture's social events, such as weddings and naming ceremonies. Their storytelling and singing often feature the music of the kora, a 20-string wooden instrument similar to the sitar or the harp. These wonderfully illustrated pages contextualize the kora within the cultural realities of West Africa, thereby imparting history along with pitch notations and virtual visits among master musicians. Downloadable sound files of Alhaji Bai Konte, for instance, are a tantalizing introduction to the instrument. *–AN*

Modified Online
http://www.compulink.co.uk/~modified/

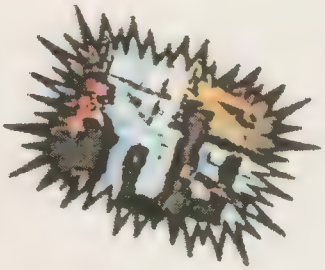
Billing itself as an interactive music channel, Modified Online (from a UK media group of the same name) brings live four-track audio mixing to the internet, offering a menu of various mixes that you can listen to while uploading and modifying your own sounds. If you have Netscape and Shockwave, you're invited to enter The Freezer, ("the world's first interactive Web single"), but even appropriately equipped, you might still be out of luck. I consistently got the message, "Sorry groove cruisers, new Freezer transmissions are temporarily on hold while us hard drinkers are drinking hard in Ibiza." There are, however, more hotlinks than I've ever seen in one place and a demo of Modified's interactive FreQUency CD-ROM. *–ES*

MusicWest
http://www.musicwest.com/

net rave

Finally, a music site that focuses on alternative bands and cultural issues while at the same time boasting truly creative design, engaging text, great graphics, and *beaucoup* information. MusicWest appears to have been constructed to mark an interdisciplinary conference that went down in May. However, the conference and its concerns live on in this site covering everything from No Means No and DOA to censorship issues, methods of taking on the music industry, and links to record labels like C/Z and Wrong Records. Very clever, very insightful, MusicWest is a site I'll be revisiting often. *–ES*

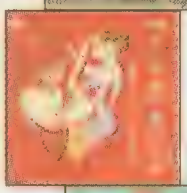
Mr. Nefff's Mambo Karaoke Steakhouse

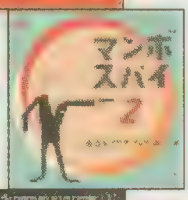


http://www.teleport.com/~zoetek/mambo_karaoke/entrance.html

SITE of the MONTH Nov 96

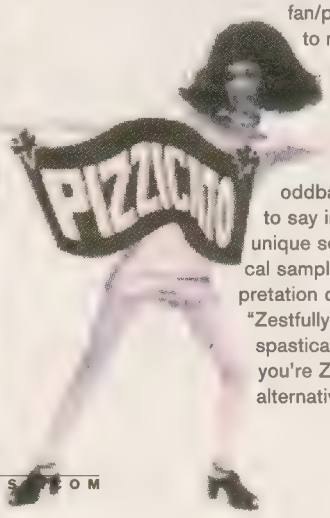
You want alternative? I'll give you alternative. Step into the totally whacked out world of Mr. Arthur Nefff (three f's mandatory), a home page so strange that "strange" isn't the word. Erstwhile front man for the Midwestern musical sensation The Pachinko Playboys, Nefff specializes in a hybridized musical form featuring Latin rhythms with an Eastern twang–way East, that is, like Tokyo. It's a bizarre commingling: East meets West with surprising results.





OK, now, don't think I'm not hep to the obvious parody, Nefff's fictitious album covers and bogus band history. But while The Pachinko Playboys Record Museum may be nothing more than a stupendous gag, ("By 1969, we had lost our way," writes Nefff, "breaking up during the recording of the unreleased *Let It Be Bop*, which had few, if any, Oriental influences, unless you count the feedback free jazz sitar solo.") the site is not entirely a joke. Click on "Japanese Mambo Jukebox" to see what I mean. The bands on this page are for real, honest-to-goodness Japanese mambo ensembles. Download songs from acts with names like Frank Chickens and Shang Shang Typhoon for a taste of this new genre. I don't know about you, pardner, but I kinda like it.

Fans of the style (are there any out there?) should follow the link to the excellent Pizzicato Five fan page (http://www.clark.net/pub/fan/pizz.html), not to mention the pages, official and otherwise, of various other big name lounge acts, Esquivel being perhaps the best known.



As for Mr. Nefff, he's an oddball–a "hen no gaizin," as they like to say in Nippon–with a ... ahem ... unique sense of humor. His only real musical sampling on the site is an atonal interpretation of an old pop culture standard. "Zestfully clean, Zestfully clean," he croons spastically, "you're not fully clean unless you're Zestfully clean." Now if that's not alternative, I don't know what is. *–PJ*

Netmix
http://www.netmix.com/

net rave

Stuck in Walla Walla but wish you were wallowing in a New York nightclub, undulating to the latest House riffs? Point your sound card to the transparent, throbbing, DJ-driven, Netmix site, where an hour of ethereal RAM files await your delight. Really leavens the daily bread, if you know what I mean. Netmix promises a new hour, twice a week, of the latest sounds from unabashedly self-promoting DJ's around the world. There's not a lot of variety here, so a quick listen will tell whether these vibes will soothe or grate. Make sure you download RealAudio 2.0 first (link provided). *–SL*

Steely Dan Internet Resource
http://pages.prodigy.com/steelydan/

More than just a fan page, this site is worth visiting even if you're not big on the band's sound. Though all aspects of Steely Dan's world are represented in the manner of discography, photos, history,

Don a fez and step inside

sound clips, tour schedules (first European shows in 22 years), etc., other areas of the site offer good reading to the random passerby. In the Cafe L'escargot, you're given several chat options, a reading room with music-related essays, links to The Electronic Frontier Foundation (well worth a visit!), and Pathfinder. A nicely designed and comfortable place to spend some time. *–ES*

Styx
http://ParadiseTheatre.com

Party on, Garth. Styx are back and taking the '70s into the '90s with their fab revival page...Yes, on tour again for the thrill of the masses who once rocked to tunes as familiar as...um..."Come Sail Away?" If you liked them the first time around you may feel a nostalgic warmth for this tour; on the other hand, if those old albums all ended up in Frisbee heaven you can leave this site off your bookmark list. Lots of tour photos, all of which could be captioned "See! We're still alive!" *–SL*

The Black Music Department
http://www.frontiermusic.com/

The curriculum as designed by Frontier Music is pretty narrow; Black music here means R&B and Rap, period. No jazz, no gospel, no soukous or juju. And despite a purported "devotion to the development of new music," the site is really all about selling records, which is fine, except that it comes off a little forced and heavy-handed. The Entertainment 101 section is aimed at insiders, with profiles of recording execs and the like. The graphics are

Just all about selling records

none too dope anywhere on the site and, remarkably–unless I missed something–there's no sound available. So, unless you're an independent record retailer interested in doing business with Frontier, you'd be wise to point your browser elsewhere. *–PJ*

The Theremin Home Page
http://www.Nashville.Net/~theremin/

Invented by Leon Theremin in 1918 and credited with being the first "synthesizer,"

Jammin' with Mr. Theremin

the theremin is played by waving one's hands near two metal antennae: one for pitch, the other for volume. The result is a beguiling elasticity of sound that's been much in vogue of late among experimental musicians. Here, neophytes and adepts alike will find what they're looking for, from theremin ordering information and detailed building schematics to performance schedules and a photo gallery. You can also download sounds, browse a bibliography, or join a newsgroup that discusses technique. A visually appealing, informative, one-stop site. *–AN*

The Velvet Underground
http://spider.media.philips.com/vu/

net rave

This site is big on information in a straightforward, nonfanatical way. Much of the text is taken from David Fricke's 20-thousand word essay on the history and legacy of the Velvet Underground, which is included with the *Peel Slowly and See* album. The site includes profiles of the band members and a full discography. Even if you're a longtime fan of the Velvet

Peel slowly for best results

Underground, this site is useful in exploring the background and the influences that colored their music and contributed to their lasting impact. *–ES*

tt.net
http://www.tt.net/index.html

tt.net is a Minneapolis-based ISP that maintains a large Web site catering to the local independent music scene. A straightforward, graphical interface points you to a comprehensive and frequently updated list of local record labels, bands, and management services. Labels hosted here include Restless Records, TRG, Atomic Theory, and their numerous subsidiaries. Bands range from The Replacements to The Last Poets and Babes in Toyland. Individual sites typically include press information, sound and video samples, and ordering information. Primarily, this site was built to shift units and is best approached with that in mind. Of the individual nodes, Restless seemed to be the most evolved. *–AN*

pastimes

Anglers Online
http://www.streamside.com/index.html

Why is it that the sites that carry all the accolades seem to disappoint so frequently? It may be top 5% in someone's book, but I'd say that the folks behind this site need to make some time for a little organizing; the home page looks like my tackle box–a lot of tangled lines. You'll have to wade through of garish ads to get to the meat of these pages, which are fairly comprehensive if you're looking for an outfitter, or want to have a chat with others about gear or technique, but I suspect true aficionados will spend more time in one of many dedicated newsgroups or magazines that are linked from this site. *–SL*

Ikebana
http://www.meshnet.or.jp/ikebana/

For those who don't know, Ikebana is Japanese flower arrangement. But it isn't just throwing a bunch of flowers together. It is meant to be a relaxing and spiritual experience. Even big, tough Samurais do it. This site is brought to you by Ikebana International, a group that promotes Ikebana and boasts 10,000 members worldwide. Their motto is "friendship through flowers." You can learn how to join the club here (it only costs you 5,000 yen a year) and look up upcoming conventions or events from all over the world. For those who want to read more about it, there's a list of some recommended books. It's just too bad there aren't more pictures of actual arrangements. *–JA*

KOA
http://www.loci.com/HO/village/koa/koatitle.html

From the folks who put the "K" in kamping, here's the unassuming KOA site, a throwback to the heyday of family teepee vacations. Hard to figure why they felt that they needed to have a presence on the Web, given their low-tech tradition. A mere three quaint pages: One points you to the campground nearest your holiday destination, another reminds you what every good camper has in her knapsack, and the third proffers a set of campfire recipes. Somehow I can't see getting online to plan my idyllic road tour, but that's just stodgy old me; I'd rather just stumble onto the campground. *–SL*

Matt's Guide to Cheap Wine
http://http.bsd.uchicago.edu/~m-winitzer/wine/

Here's to Matt for his unpretentious, yet

Bargains at twice the price

full-bodied and downright bacchanalian site. Any suggestion of snobbery is mollified by our steward's self-imposed restriction to the reasonably economical limit of $10 a bottle. His list amounts to a just a handful of favorites in a couple of categories (reds and whites, no rose please), so there's no presumption to encompass the subject. Scans of bottle labels lend a colorful texture to each review, and as Matt might say, we get enough bite to keep it interesting; not too refined, but with a nice range of flavors. *–SL*

Rob Mac's Falconry
http://www.cs.loyola.edu/~rmcilhar/falconry/falconry.html

I admit to a longstanding fascination with raptors, and apparently I'm in the

CONTENT	AESTHETIC MERIT	TECHNO SMARTNESS
Runneth over	A looker!	Brilliant
Half-empty	Not half bad	Aglow
Dry	A dog	Dim

company of kings. It seems falconry was practiced by royalty across Eurasia for centuries and still has a devoted world following, now with a decidedly conservationist bent. This is the place for enthusiasts to find information about how and where to practice the husbandry of birds of prey. It may also interest the voyeur who wonders whether there's a demonstration of falconry nearby, or those who would like a peregrine's image for the desktop. It's a mark of distinction, ya know. –*SL*

The Girl Scouting Resource Center
http://www.cais.net/cwelch/gsrc/index.htm

The Girl Scouts are working with a pretty drab palette at this page, which is default gray throughout. But they've implemented Frames, darn it all, so that's a start. For anyone involved in scouting of the girlish variety, this online forum is sure to be a fine resource, filled as it is with ideas on perfectly useless crafts and diversions, like covered pencils and SWAPS, which, I'm informed, stands for Special Whatamacallits Affectionately Pinned Somewhere (?!?). There are also mailing lists, "chat boards," and some solid tips on pushing those cookies. –*PJ*

The Magical World of Fisher-Price Toys
http://www2.best.com/~elusive/fisher_price/index.html

net rave

You're probably thinking, "This is a site for kids." Well, not so fast. While kids may have an interest, this is primarily a site for collectors. Seems that some of us took our toys more seriously than others. Who knew? Of course, now you may be thinking it would fit better in the "bizarre" category. Well, don't think I

Remember this logo? Circa 1956

didn't consider it. But wait til you see this site: The obvious devotion and simple sincerity at work in these pages, not to mention the elegant presentation of the subject, simply precluded such a slight. No matter what, whether you're a serious collector or just an idle browser in search of the next curiosity, go here; you won't be sorry. This is Web design at its unpretentious best. –*PJ*

The Purple Martin House
http://ourworld.compuserve.com/homepages/PurpleMartins/

Eating about 2000 mosquitoes per day

The purple martin is a bird, one of the swifts, and apparently in some danger of being displaced by more prolific sparrows and starlings. It's a handsome bird with an enchanting song (.WAV file included at the site), and will nest in anything clean and hollow, preferably high and out of the way. The authors would like you to consider helping preserve this bird's domestic presence and, to that end, offer you the opportunity to send away for any of a number of fine birdhouse designs for your yard. I would have liked to learn a bit more about the habits of these feathered bipeds, and must say I remain perplexed by the authors' chauvinistic attitude toward the martin vis-à-vis its avian competitors (the site is brought to you by Dead Sparrow Productions, sporting a suitably macabre logo). Can't we all just get along? –*SL*

politics

All Politics
http://www.allpolitics.com/

net rave

All Politics is a joint venture between Time-Warner and, um, well now that you mention it, Time-Warner. Turner Broadcasting was in there somewhere, but then Time-Warner consumed it like a tasty morsel. Anyway, this attractive and informative site is updated daily and contains U.S. political news, analysis, commentary, polls, games, hot topics, audio clips, video clips, a search engine, and more. There's enough content here to drown in. One complaint: They seem to have left out the audio clip of Bob Dole saying "Pinch me, but..." I really wanted that one. –*GB*

Center for Democracy and Technology
http://www.cdt.org/

The CDT is an organization that was created to protect and fight for all kinds of electronics rights. They strive to make people aware of issues that affect computer users, including free expression online, computer privacy, pending legislation, and more. With the recent strikedown of the Communications Decency Act, this was a major source of news. Follow new trends in cyberights too by joining their mailing list. There are always headlines on major stories, follow ups on past stories, news from Congress and lawsuits affecting computer users. Don't miss the very effective privacy demonstration. –*JA*

Christian Coalition Interactive
http://cc.org

Before entering the site you're given a shakedown: Use Netscape with these margins or else! Once inside, the shakedown continues. The Christian Coalition is a conservative organization formed to preach their brand of Christian values (read Republican values). They are active in many political fronts fighting for the Christian cause. Every day, there are news items and updates on continuing stories of interest to the CC community. They also have a "non-partisan" (yeah, right) voter guide that includes congressional scorecards that list issues important to the CC, like the cleverly worded "Promoting Homosexuality to School Children" and "Taxpayer Funded Pornography." Each congressperson is essentially graded on whether they voted along with the CC or not. The "Family Resources" page has no real resources unless you want to buy books, tapes, pins, magazines, and games–for a suggested "donation." If only all "non-partisan" organizations were this fair and even-handed. –*JA*

Clinton/Gore 96
http://www.cg96.org/

net rave

Presidential politics and propaganda Web-style! This is the official site of the Campaign for the Reelection of the President, and it's replete with all kinds of information on the campaign. There are nifty graphics: a scrolling news window, a slide show, a big picture of old glory flying proud, and some downloadable pictures and movies. The color scheme here is red, white, and blue all over. There's a campaign volunteer of the week (picture and bio included) and downloadable images you can include in your own home page (buttons, pictures, etc.) The most plentiful items are the mounds of press releases–get ready to read all the best news about this fine nation of ours, and guess who takes credit for it? Our man, Clinton. You can get state-by-state rundowns on how Clinton made your home state great, but it all boils down to roughly the same info spiel. As handsome as this site is, it's the kind of thing that makes you yearn for the days before TV and computers. –*JA*

Who's that guy in back, again?

Floor Activities
http://majoritywhip.house.gov/floor/floorframeview.htm

This web site is utterly and comprehensively devoid of charm or personality, with gray backgrounds, long, unbroken scrolls of type, and a broken promise of streaming audio leading only to an error message: "There is no document by that name available at the requested location." The only semi-interesting thing here is a live video feed provided by cable TV network C-SPAN. If you're a political science major you might have reason to care that "Mr. Bereuter moved to suspend the rules and agree to the resolution, as amended." But nobody else does. –*GB*

Four 11
The Four11 directory is a free, on-line search and listing service that provides the most reliable, centralized way for people who use the Internet to find and communicate with each other.
• Complete U.S. telephone white pages directory
• Over 7.5 million unique e-mail address listings
• Internet telephone and videophone directories
• Internet caller forums
http://www.Four11.com/
ph: (415) 617-2000
e-mail:
humans@Four11.com

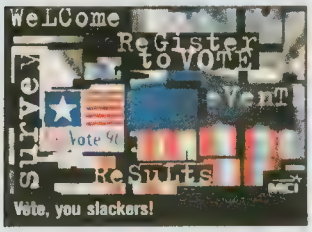
Impact Online
http://www.impactonline.org/

net rave

Want to volunteer? Want to make an impact? Start by looking for organizations, people, and information here at Impact Online, a clearinghouse for groups that strive to make a difference. You can browse the site or search for topics that interest you. There are groups dealing with political, environmental, educational, and health issues, and more. In addition, you will soon be able to purchase goods from "socially responsible businesses." If you search by person you can see short profiles of people who have registered. Organizations can also register here and be listed. *–JA*

Net Vote '96
http://netvote96.mci.com/

Along the same lines as the Rock the Vote campaign, the Net Vote '96 page from MCI allows for online voter registration, reportedly "netting" a thousand new



voters in the first 24 hours. Now, I'm all for getting out the vote, and I salute the people who are working to make it easier, but rhetorically I wonder whether people who can't be bothered to go down to the post office or fire station to register should be allowed to vote in the first place? I know I'll catch hell for that sentiment, but.... The other main feature of the site is a political poll restricted to high school students (passwords required) wherein they can register their opinions on the issues. Results from the surveys will be posted at the site. It could be interesting. *–PJ*

Organization of American States
http://www.oas.org/

Only true fans of the OAS will find this place interesting, and even they will have to dig for the good stuff. Man, but

it's dry. Depressingly free of graphics, this is a purely informative site where it's almost impossible to find anything you're looking for. You just seem to follow link after link without ever getting to the nitty gritty. In case you didn't know, the OAS is an organization that supports all of the Americas–yep, the whole hemisphere–in promoting peace, fighting terrorism, stopping government corruption, advancing trade, addressing environmental issues, and even promoting cultural events. So, now that you know what they do, you can save yourself some time and aggravation, and surf elsewhere. *–JA*

PoliticsNow
http://www.politicsnow.com/

Sometimes, when a Daddy Web site and a Mommy Web site love each other very much, they decide to make a new, baby Web site. That's the case here, sort of. The merging of ElectionLine and PoliticsUSA has created PoliticsNow, the content of which alternates between impressive and lackluster. Clearly, a lot of talented people work long hours every day on PoliticsNow, but it's still drab in many ways. Highlights: A searchable directory of more than 7000 movers and shakers, an almanac of American politics, a searchable database of political news stories, and the sardonic "Hit List." *–GB*

The Brown Flu
http://www.arizonaweb.com/townhall/brownflu.html

The Brown Flu site may not be pretty, but it packs a whollop by promoting a controversial one-day nationwide sick-out by "Mexicanos" and Mexican-Americans on the day of the Republican National Convention. Organizers say if immigrant-bashers want an economy without immigrant labor, they should get what they wish for, then deal with the consequences. Agribusiness, the service industry, and other key sectors of the economy will come to a halt for one day if the protest succeeds. By the time you read this, of course, you should know how it went. *–GB*

The Electronic Frontier Foundation
http://www.eff.org

The Electronic Frontier Foundation is dedicated to protecting and promoting the civil liberties of internet denizens. Working to guarantee the free flow of information both public and private, the EFF is poised on the outside edge of digital media law. They led opposition to the "Clipper Chip" and the Communications Decency Act, fought the Church of Scientology, and created the online Blue Ribbon Campaign against censorship. Anyone who spends time online has been affected by the efforts of the EFF, and their site is well worth your time, if you care about your rights. *–GB*

The Everlasting GOP-Stopper
http://members.aol.com/gopstopper/index.html

Don't you just hate the conservative media? Or is it a liberal media? Oh, whatever. This site is "Your Antidote to the Conservative Media." The Everlasting GOP-Stopper is an almost-weekly magazine dedicated to highlighting inane Republican ideas and quotes, demystifying skewed facts and figures, and just generally mocking the conservative right. There is a Hypocrite of the Week feature, along with "classic articles" (only a precious few were available when I visited), not to mention merchandise: GOP-Stopper t-shirts and the like. *–JA*

The Land of Pitman
http://www.sff.net/people/pitman/

This is the home page of Mark Pitcavage, a.k.a Pitman, a self-described historian and freelance writer who specializes in the history of militia in America. But beware: This isn't a place for anti-government types to gather (although they probably do visit). This is more of a scholarly place. In fact, Pitman's Militia Watchdog page (just a click away) monitors and gathers news about the militia movement in America. Yes, it's an anti-militia page, but anyone interested in American militia groups can find lots of good stuff here. There is a huge, comprehensive militia FAQ, history, some recent news, essays, and much more. Aside from the militia, The Land of Pitman has miscellaneous links to his other pages. *–JA*

The Nature Conservancy
http://www.tnc.org/

net rave

This is not your average bunch of tree-huggers. What Nature Conservancy does is buy land where wildlife may be struggling to survive. They provide sanctuaries where animals can thrive and people can visit. They now have 9 million acres of "safe" land all around the world. If their cause moves you, you're invited to join the organization online. Aside from the membership stuff, there is plenty to read up on; educate yourself on the plight of nearly extinct animals from exotic locales and learn what the Nature Conservancy has done to help. The nature shots are beautiful, by the way. You can also find links to Usenet groups that cater to hiking, fishing, and birding enthusiasts. Yes, I said birding. *–JA*

Unofficial Ralph Nader for President
http://www.rahul.net/cameron/nader/

Although he stands something like a snowball's chance in hell of being elected president, Ralph Nader–the longtime consumer activist and public gadfly–is the official candidate of the underdog Green Party (http://www.greens.org/). There is some question as to whether Mr. Nader supports the party's platform, but then Mr. Dole says he hasn't even looked at the Republican version. You can, however, read *The Concord Principles*, Nader's own credo here and access interviews with the man. If you like what you hear, the creators of the site ask you to cast your vote in the 3rd Party Central Ballot Box at (http://www.math.princeton.edu/~tpbarber/3pc/vote/). When I looked, Harry Browne, the Libertarian candidate (http://www.HarryBrowne96.org/), led the "independents," with Nader running second. *–PJ*

professional

Association of Women Industrial Designers
http://www.core77.com/AWID/

Perhaps it's not my place to say so, but it does seem a little unfortunate that

AWID, a professional society for women, should choose a kitchen motif for its interface. It's nice enough, I suppose, with its sherbet-colored cabinets and its fresh-from-the-oven icons. It just seemed out of place a little. No matter; although the cupboards are a little bare in most spots when I looked, its a promising start, with ingredients for female designers like job listings, online portfolios, resume postings, newsletters, etc. Young women interested in a career in industrial design should check out the FAQ, located just under the plate of donuts, in the "chat" cupboard. *–PJ*

Career Toolbox
http://www.careertoolbox.com/

net rave

A page from scotch distillers, Chivas Regal, this is another prime example of corporations having to give Web surfers

a reason to point the browser their way. In this case the target group is young go-getters bounding up the corporate ladder. No surprise, then, that I couldn't relate to it. Not only am I uninterested in

CONTENT	AESTHETIC MERIT	TECHNO SMARTNESS
Runneth over	A looker	Brilliant
Half-empty	Not half bad	Aglow
Dry	A dog	Dim

the notion of "getting ahead" and "success" as Chivas Regal defines it, but I can't stand scotch. Still, they've gone to a lot of trouble to put this together; the career and finance tips are cleverly presented in interactive scenarios that give the whole exercise the feel of a game. It's an effective approach, especially in the Test Your Smarts segment. There's an impressive amount of information here, as well as a potentially worthwhile CD-ROM offer and an online Tool of the Day. While none of it is earth-shattering, it is free, and unless you purposefully connect to Chivas's home page (chivas.com), remarkably free of ad material. *–PJ*

Centre for Design at RMIT
http://daedalus.edc.rmit.edu.au/

Despite the pretentious spelling of "center," this would appear to be a hard-nosed organization devoted to sustainable architecture and industrial design. The pages are a little bare, despite some pretty startling color, but it appears to be meant as a brochure/bulletin board only, advising interested parties of design contests, like the Green Heating Quest, and conferences like the one on "Life Cycle Assessment." Even the links are no-nonsense and profession-oriented. Not much here for the idly curious. *–PJ*

Desktop Publisher Journal
http://www.dtpjournal.com/

Everything you need to know about the latest developments in desktop publishing technology is here, including tips on trends, the lowdown on copyright issues, multimedia project management, and more. The Technique section helps desktop publishers beef-up their bag o' tricks, discussing how-to and which software to use for a given effect. Vendor Lists offer the specs on a multitude of products, and you'll find reviews of the newest in hardware and multimedia in the Technology section. Desktop publishing-related articles are found in the DTP Forum. Desktop publishing wizards and neophytes alike are sure to find something useful here. *–ES*

Doctor's Guide to the Internet
http://www.pslgroup.com/DOCGUIDE.HTM

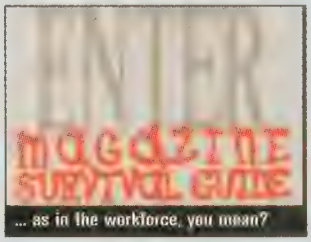
Despite the numerous awards this site has garnered and proudly displays, there are only a handful of fresh topics covered; hardly a comprehensive list. It does provide a good set of links to other sites

of medical relevance–conferences, specific disease categories, and some lifestyle topics (financial and leisure pages). Turn off your blinkies and put on your pharmaceutical ad blinders before entering. I'd rate this more useful as a launching pad than a major bookmark entry–there are better sites out there that try the same trick. *–SL*

Enter Magazine Survival Guide
http://www.entermag.com/

net rave

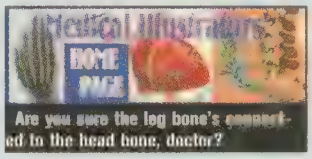
This zine is a career guide and consumer resource aimed at college students and recent graduates. Well-designed and stylishly written, Enter Magazine Survival Guide delivers sound



advice and interesting reading without that irksome self-consciousness so common to youth-focused media. Get the goods on how to buy a car without getting taken, the best ways to beat the job interview shakes, and how to get serious cash for old clothes. Not many graphics, but the quality of the text is such that they're not missed. The Survival Guide has lots of useful info if you're striking out on your own for the first time, or you'd just like to brush up on those so-called survival skills. *–ES*

Medical Illustrators' Home Page
http://www.mednexus.com/med_illustrator/index.html

A well-drawn anatomical image can mean the difference between a vague notion and crystalline understanding for med students as well as patients. We've come a long way from the days when the legendary



Frank Netter, MD, monopolized the field. This site is both a professional resource for medical illustrators and a showcase for the groups and individuals whose art is nicely displayed here. All of the pictures offered for browsing are two dimensional, but for advanced imaging techniques that really make use of a computer, try the links to 3D-reconstruction sites. *–SL*

National Logistics Web
http://www.charm.net/~marquise/logistics/index.shtml

The National Logistics Web has gotten just a little ahead of itself. As of this writing, the site's City Web is functioning only in two spots: Baltimore and Mobile. Other cities are "pending," all on the Eastern Seaboard or Gulf Coast except for Seattle, the lone Western locale. OK, lest I get ahead of myself,

Editor & Publisher Interactive

http://www.mediainfo.com/edpub/

SITE of the MONTH Nov 96

Editor & Publisher Interactive is a dream come true for anyone in the journalism game or anyone interested in any aspect of the publishing scene. The site combines an online version of *Editor & Publisher*, the print magazine, with links to a wide array of reference sites, accessed from a Research page that itself is worth the bookmark. You'll find home pages for newspaper companies, free news services, research facilities, press associations, wire services, major online services.... If it has to do with news, it's here. Looking for an online newspaper? As of this writing the E & P Interactive Online Newspaper database comprises 1521 entries.

The News Page features lead stories from the *E & P* print edition, and a summary of news items on information technology from Educom, a Washington, DC-based consortium of colleges and universities seeking to transform education through the use of information technology. If all of this sounds like too much info to be easily accessed, rest assured that Editor & Publisher Interactive is well-organized and logical, like good editors and publishers should be...but seldom are. For those not familiar with the print version of *E & P*, don't be intimidated by the name. This is not simply a professional journal; its articles are important reading for anyone interested in current political and media issues. A quick search of available articles offers up substantive pieces on the Freedom of Information Act, the slave trade in Sudan, and the how much the U.S. government pays for secrecy.

The site doesn't call itself "interactive" for nothing. In the E & P Interactive Forum readers are encouraged to respond to a topical article such as the one entitled, "Newspapers Must Save Their Own Lives." Enumerating the ways in which newspapers have lost touch with readers, Rolfe Neil, publisher of *The Charlotte Observer*, sets forth a nine-point plan. There's something oddly comforting in debating the fate of newsprint online, as if the death knell may not toll for awhile yet. E & P Interactive, for all its attention to news gathering technology, still manages to convey images of hard-boiled, chain-smoking reporters tapping away in shirt sleeves and loosened ties for a paper that represents a real city and not just a cyberplace.

When you're surfing the Web, overwhelmed by the flood of news and information that seems to come magically, out of nowhere, it's easy to forget that there are individuals out there who still do the legwork to make sense of it all before it hits the page–sorry, screen.

E & P Interactive manages to provide an unparalleled resource for research, while presenting articles that remind of us the very real business of reporting and publishing, both online and off. *–ES*

logistics in this case refers to shipping cargo, by land, sea, and air. The site has directory listings for shipping companies, Dept. of Transportation protocol info, container info (as in Sealand, etc.), and schedules. It's a good idea with much potential–I should think–but even by its own schedule the site is presently lagging. –*PJ*

National Press Club
http://town.hall.org/places/npc/

This comprehensive site features all types of journalistic links, from CNN to reporters.org and six different search engines. Extremely well put together resources allow for access to every major news site, and a slew of lesser-kowns like The Beat Page, not to mention wire services galore. This is *the* place for news junkies and investigators. –*ES*

Peace Corps Crossroads
http://www.concentric.net/~jmuehl/links.shtml

This site is dedicated to helping prospective Peace Corps volunteers find each other and allows returned or current volunteers to hook up with their compatriots and swap "reentry" stories. A large part of the site consists of a list, in alphabetical order by country, which provides basic info about the available sites and individuals and includes hotlinked e-mail addresses on soon-to-be departing volunteers, as well as returned (or current) volunteers willing to act as "mentors." There are more Peace Corps-related sites here than you can shake a walking stick at. Also, a great place for links to a multitude of international pages. –*ES*

Pear Pages
http://www.usapears.com/pears/

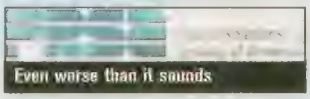
A handsome page from the hardworking folks at The Oregon/ Washington/ California Pear Bureau–what do you think, they grow on trees?–this is the place to come for the lowdown on the more 3,000 varieties out there. This month's featured

Finest damned pears in the world!

pear is the Seckel, a roundish, diminutive little number that hits markets in mid-August. Recipes are included. Grocers and suppliers can contact the Pear Bureau via e-mail, and parents wishing to tempt their lil'uns away from the Sugar Pops might pay a visit to the PearBear Healthy Kids section. –*PJ*

Public Relations Society of America
http://www.prsa.org/

The Public Relations Society of America (PRSA), headquartered in New York City, is the world's largest organization for public relations professionals. The odd thing is, this site is as visually interesting as a


Even worse than it sounds

cardboard box. I mean, isn't public relations about selling an image, a product, a service, and making it seem appealing? Wouldn't you think a site from the PRSA would try to integrate a little flash and color? What you do get here is Tactics, their monthly newspaper, updates on seminars, locations of PRSA chapters, and lists of available resources. It's hard to get excited about any of it. Maybe the PRSA needs a little PR of its own. –*ES*

The Internet Society
http://www.isoc.org/

Welcome to The Internet Society. Sounds good. What the hell is it? I still don't really know. There was a section devoted to answering exactly that question, but I still couldn't make heads or tails of it. It all sounded impossibly vague and bland. Item number two in a list of "specific goals and purposes" read: "growth and evolution of the Internet architecture." That's specific?? All I can say is, if the home page is any indication, this is a dull group. The only real sign of life was this quote from the Internet Engineering Task Force Credo: "We reject kings, presidents, and voting. We believe in rough consensus and running code." Sounds like a libertarian approach to computing. –*PJ*

reference

Big Book
http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-adv/bigbook/front.htm

net rave

Are you looking for a resource that can locate any business in North America? Well, Big Book by Washingtonpost.com might be the answer. Type in the name of the business or its category and odds

The Washington Post's answer to the Yellow Pages

are good that Big Book can track it down, even if you don't know the city or state. There's an address book feature, maps available for 16 million U.S. businesses, with a zoom feature, and plans for a 3D version in the works. Big Book also provides a handy Shortlist which offers select Web sites for each search category: travel, health, computers, etc. With so many references of this sort popping up, it's difficult to say which one is the end-all, but Big Book is definitely in the running. –*ES*

Big Yellow
http://www.bigyellow.com

This searchable directory of phone book yellow pages from across the nation would benefit greatly from an organizational structure similar to–now, let me

Flying in the face of convention

know if anybody gets confused at this part–the yellow pages. In fact, any organizational structure whatsoever would help. A supposed point-and-click interface, this one expects users to do a lot of typing. To be useful the site requires that you already know the name and address of the business you want a listing for. That goes against everything our yellow pages forefathers stood for. Check your local yellow pages under "Duh." –*GB*

Classmates Online
http://www.classmates.com

A way for former high school friends to find one another, including an e-mail address registry. So far there are listings for ex-students from more than 18,000 high schools in the U.S. and Canada (as well as a few American schools overseas). Registration is free, but a one-time $15 membership allows a user to post a 250-word bio and a hyperlink to any one URL. Registration is intuitive, but takes a long time when the Web server is bogged down. A list of cities in California (99 K) took four or five minutes to appear. –*GB*

Dinenet Menus Online
http://www.menusonline.com

Aside from the tiresome Java-generated crawling text on its splash page, this site is pretty cool. Every restaurant in each of

What's for dinner?

seven metropolitan areas (Atlanta, Boston, Chicago, Los Angeles, New York, San Francisco, and Washington/ Baltimore) is invited to submit its menu, two reviews, and a photograph. Participating restaurants are not charged for the service, and so several hundred restaurants have already joined in. Now, all this site needs is to collaborate with FedEx to offer a nationwide, high-quality food delivery service: 30 minutes cross-country, or it's free. Land to goshen! Wouldn't that be the cat's pajamas? –*GB*

Full-Text State Statutes and Legislation
http://www.prairienet.org/~scruffy/f.htm

Full-Text State Statutes and Legislation on the internet is a straightforward site, listing the constitution and statutes of every state in the Union. This entire venture is put together by an individual who goes by the name of Scruffy. You can link to legislature-related sites or check out Scruffy's other offerings, like the Las Vegas Movie List, the "You Just Might Be From Springfield, Illinois If...." page, and the ever-popular Poodle-Schnauzer Page. It's nice to see that someone so serious about state legislatures has the good sense to link to The Virtual Pet Cemetery. –*ES*

Internet Address Finder
http://www.555-1212.com

Redundant, redundant, redundant. How many such directories must there be? Yahoo! lists more than 35 of these so far. They're spreading like kudzu. What somebody ought to do is make a page like Savvy Search that presents a user with one or two text entry fields and then searches all of these directories in one fell swoop. This site is great, but so are many of the others, and each of them includes millions of entries. If their massive databases are virtually identical and their search results are virtually identical, why do we need so damn many of these things? –*GB*

Journal Graphics
http://www.charm.net/~kelsy/

Journal Graphics Online provides transcripts of just about every news program you can think of, from CNN, PBS, ABC, or NPR, offers video tape of CNN broadcasts since August 13, 1995, and is currently building up a PBS video archive. They also offer a paid clipping service called Topic Alert, which can keep you up to date on news from all the major networks, as well as those already listed. The site lets you search alphabetically or by topic, and the inventory is truly impressive. Unfortunately, no prices are given for any of the transcripts, nor for the other services offered. –*ES*

Listing Link
http://www.listinglink.com

net rave

Although parts of this site remain under construction, as a whole it looks very promising. Listing Link offers real estate listings and photos from all over and for pretty much every type of property, whether residential or commercial, industrial or farmland. Hoping to find commercial office space in Walla Walla or a grassy knoll in Dallas? Interested in con

CONTENT	AESTHETIC MERIT	TECHNO SMARTNESS
Runneth over	A looker	Brilliant
Half-empty	Not half bad	Aglow
Dry	A dog	Dim

tacting every real estate agent in your cousin Melvin's area code? Want to get one mortgage each from every bank with an internet presence? If you want to know something about real estate, start here. You could do worse. –*GB*

Maczynski's Info Page
http://www.info-s.com

Similar in spirit to what Yahoo! was when it was still on akebono.stanford.edu, Maczynski's has an organizational problem that will prevent it from becoming a popular resource: There is no organizational depth. That means respected newspapers are listed on the same page with art and literature zines, hobbyist publications, scienbe fiction, and whatever the cat dragged in. There are thousands of links, however, and this site is certainly worth at least one visit for a bookmark raid. The categories with the most listings are Music and Talk and Home Page Plus. –*GB*

Name Base Book Index
http://www.pir.org/

Oh, what conspiracy theorists wouldn't give for a cross-referenced database of people and countries involved with real and imagined 20th century intrigue. Here, at last, is the site of their dreams. Information is culled from hundreds of books and countless periodicals published over the last 34 years. Returned search results come in a modified bibliographic form. William Casey=556 citations and James Carville=14. Also features book reviews and annotations in 20 broad categories. –*GB*

National Highway Traffic Safety Administration
http://www.nhtsa.dot.gov/cars/

net rave

Considering buying a new car? Safety factors a major consideration? This well-designed presence of the NHTSA, home of those hardworking, cheerful, crash-test dummies, offers visitors a complete rundown on safety features, crash-test ratings, theft ratings, recall information, and compliance reports. It's a deep resource, well-laid out and thorough. If there is a problem, it has to do with documentation.

As is too often the case with such info, it is a little difficult to understand the significance of the information you've accessed. The site always concerns itself primarily with newer cars. Nevertheless, this is a fine resource. –*PJ*

Social Security Death Index
http://www.infobases.com/ssdi/query01.htm

A searchable database of people who had Social Security benefits when they died, which, even if you possess and provide all the information asked for, does not work. Or, if it does work, the instructions are so abstruse that mistakes are inevitable. No explanation is provided for interpreting the cryptic chart generated by a query. The chart returned for my query featured 61 numerals broken into 17 groups connected with intersecting lines. Whatever could this mean? Instructions then said, "Click results map to view hits," but doing so only returned the message, "There were 0 results for this operation." Grrrrr. –*GB*

The Contractor Network
http://www.contractornet.com/

Have a question about home repair or renovation? The Contractor Network has a forum for visitors wherein they can submit their questions via e-mail on any aspect of work around the house. No telling how fast the turnaround is, but

the Q & As I viewed were simple and straightforward. The Network sells a videotape called "How to Hire a Contractor" for $9.95, and offers an 800 number for referrals in your area. According to the site, home repair fraud is the second most common crime reported to the U.S. Consumer Affairs Department. If that is in fact the case, your time here could pay off. –*PJ*

The Quotations Page
http://www.starlingtech.com/quotes/index.html

net rave

This is a great page, automatic bookmark. In fact, I like it so much I set the Random Quotations page as my browser's home. Every time I open a browser window, I get three or four new ones from any one of several collections, including a database of longish Dave Barry outtakes; Ambrose Bierce's classic, *The Devil's Dictionary*; the best of deadpan comic, Steven Wright; and the excellent compendium assembled by the site creator, Michael Moncur. You can search any of the collections by keyword. Still can't find that one *bon mot* you've been looking for? The page also links to other quotation resources. As Wright says, "You can't have everything. Where would you put it?" –*PJ*

The Weather Resource
http://www.buffnet.net/~glf/

net rave

It's all here: precipitation, humidity, windchill factor, barometric pressure, the tides, sunrise, sunset, full frontal nudity. It's an emotional roller coaster, with thrills, chills, and spills. You'll laugh. You'll cry. It's the feel-good Web site of the year. It was great. I liked it even better than "Cats." But come on. Cloud cover in Australasia? Not Australia, mind you, but Australasia. Apparently someone, somewhere cares. Yeah, it's comprehensive and well organized, and it all works. For what it is, it's great. If you need it, the Weather Resource will be there for you, and you're welcome to it. –*GB*

U.S. Census Bureau Subscription Service
http://www.census.gov/prod/www/

Do the words U.S. Census Bureau make you want to yawn convulsively? Can't shake the image of some federally employed drone nosing around the neighborhood, asking you how many people live in your house? Well, you may have some surprises in store at the Bureau's CenStats Electronic Subscription Service site, of which a free preview is being offered for a limited time. Their A-Z index can get you information on everything from crops and developing world trends to genealogy, geographical mobility, and women-owned businesses. No information about joining up with the service, but this site is loaded with useful information and makes those piles of census statistics a lot more accessible and interesting. –*ES*

science

Alaska Volcano Observatory
http://www.avo.alaska.edu/

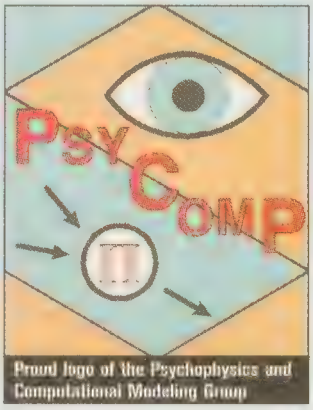
A collaborative project from the United States Geological Survey, the University of Alaska Fairbanks Geophysical Institute, and the Alaska Division of Geological and Geophysical Surveys, the Alaska Volcano Observatory is a window onto some 40 active volcanoes in the 49th state. Text, maps, and satellite images are online for study but most exciting are the weekly updates measuring seismic activity. If you live near any of those volcanoes, this information is probably more than just a fun thing to glance at–when the update shows a "Red" concern color code, you're advised to get the hell out. –*DP*

Alternative Energy Engineering
http://www.asis.com/aee/

AEE provides serious information on how you can make your own electricity from solar, wind, or water power. Its online catalogue and design guide covers 120 pages of design information and equipment for making electricity for homes, RVs, and boats, as well as everything ranging from solar fans and coolers to pumps, and hi-efficiency refrigerators. A well-illustrated introduction shows how photovoltaic cells turn light energy into electricity. Bookmark this site if you've got (or require) the energy to hack the system. –*AN*

Centre for Visual Sciences
http://cvs.anu.edu.au/CVS.html

Research in Visual Sciences seeks to achieve a better understanding of how



the image captured by an eye is analyzed by the visual system to produce a useful percept of the world. This is where scientists of the University of Australia upload their results. Studies on motion recognition and the navigational technique of insects are slowly coming online. If you've got time to kill, you might want to view the Single Image Stereograms, pictures that would have you screw up your eyes in hopes of revealing an encrypted image. Also available are images corresponding to the sight of a honey bee. –*AN*

Explorations
http://www.tc.cornell.edu/er96/science96/Explorations/

net rave

The Cornell Theory Center's online science book *Explorations* is intended as an interactive journey into the world of computational research. Studies range in scale from the cosmic to the subatomic. One project uses animated VRML files to map the pressures affecting certain American ecosystems, and encourages policy makers and the public to join biologists in learning from and acting on the data. The goal of this ongoing project is to "make a meaningful linkage between identifying ground-level phenomena and tracking their behaviors from space" so as "to monitor large-scale environmental changes in the future." A scientifically innovative and rewarding site. –*AN*

Franklin Institute Science Museum
http://sln.fi.edu/

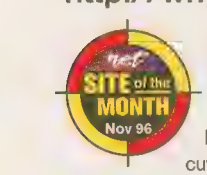
net rave

Powerful and focused design makes this enormous site a complementary extension of the Philadelphia museum. Among the

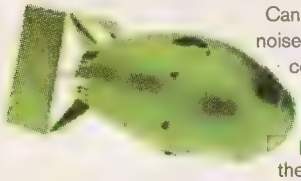
exhibits presently open, a fiercely pumping Java applet draws visitors into an exploration of the human heart that features crosslinked pages about circulation, the history of cardiology, and health. From there you can wander into a showing of

The Why Files

http://whyfiles.news.wisc.edu/



A site co-sponsored by the The National Institute for Science Education and The National Science Foundation, The Why Files is a great idea, expertly executed and perfect for a science ignoramus like myself. Based on the simple notion of explaining the science behind the news, The Why Files integrates the much dreaded topic into the day's events, thereby making science matters matter. (Educators take note).



Can't understand all this noise about mad English cows? Wondering about the reliability of all those dad-blamed political polls? Lost in the debate on the Endangered Species Act? All these issues and more have been profiled (and archived) at the site, each one given a straightforward treatment, while neither oversimplifying nor pretending to have all the answers. Indeed, most of the stories take pains to proffer contrarian viewpoints and links to other relevant sites on the Web. Each story also contains a bibliography.

The pages are well-illustrated and easy to navigate. Difficult words are hotlinked to glossary definitions, and pages are numbered so you can jump around within the stories.

Other jumping-off points are the Sports and Cool Science Image segments. In the Sports section, you can quiz yourself on basic scientific principals as expressed in terms of sports. Not as compelling as the rest of the site, the questions are also geared a little lower. In Cool Science Image, you click on intriguing photos to explore the subject further. Visitors are encouraged to send in their ideas and photos for new installments in either section.

Far and away, though, the best part of the site are the stories, which may be accessed via e-mail as well. Check for new stories weekly, or subscribe to the mailing list at: majordomo@whyfiles.news.wisc.edu. It'll help you make sense of the headlines. *–PJ*

the Hubble Deep Field photographs, which purport to capture light from the edge of the universe. One can also link to the *Philadelphia Enquirer* or post a query for the institute's scientists. The forthcoming search engine should greatly enhance future visits. *–AN*

Honolulu CC Dinosaur Exhibit

http://www.hcc.hawaii.edu/dinos/dinos.1.html

The Honolulu Community College bought some replicas of dinosaur bones from the New York Museum of Natural History so that its students could study T. rex without having to leave the islands. Add triceratops, iguanadon, and stegasauros, and you have a bona fide exhibit, which is what these pages document. However, to make this a worthwhile online pitstop for the budding paleontologist, HCC needs to upload superior photographs and beef up the descriptions that only vaguely indicate things like "carnivore teeth" and "stereoscopic vision." The downloadable audio commentary is an effort, and, anyway, you'd probably rather read a book. *–AN*

Northwest Fisheries Science Center

http://research.nwfsc.noaa.gov/

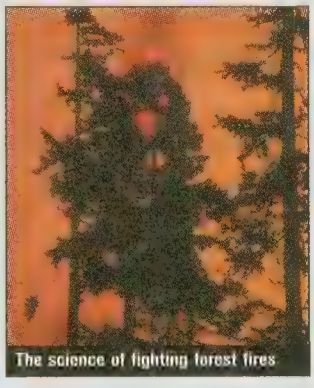
The N.F.S.C. provides scientific and technical support for the management, conservation, and development of the Pacific Northwest fishery resources. Their mission includes ecological and genetic research on salmon, and the evaluation of the effects of marine pollutants on U.S. coastal ecosystems. Their home page loads a bland photo of the fisheries into a table against a backdrop of ghostly gray salmon. A somber image, in keeping with the site's exceptionally dry writing, which, illustrated with technical diagrams, targets fellow researchers rather than casual browsers. *–AN*

Copepods: the stuff of (marine) life

Oregon Dept. of Forestry

http://salem10nt.odf.state.or.us/homepage.htm

Most of the information on the content-rich Oregon Dept. of Forestry site is concerned with forest fires in the area–statistics, progress of groups battling blazes, and other news. Forest fires are a science to be studied, and outdoor adventurers will appreciate this detailed insight into the matter. The photo gallery features intense images of burning land, while the Q & A section explains the point behind things like "prescribed burning." Weather information and links are also well-organized for more information on the amazing greenery in our national backyard. And don't forget to check out the Smokey Bear posters! *–DP*


The science of fighting forest fires

San Diego Zoo

http://www.sandiegozoo.org/

If you're fond of the venerable and gigantic San Diego Zoo, then this site should prove appealing. Its elegant and smoothly crosslinked pages connect an illustrated web of information spanning the zoo's history, its grounds, and all its collections. You can take a virtual tour of the simulated rain forests and wildlife animal park, read about a rare albino gator and other

She's got her mother's legs

CONTENT	AESTHETIC MERIT	TECHNO SMARTNESS
Runneth over	A looker	Brilliant
Half-empty	Not half bad	Aglow
Dry	A dog	Dim

recent acquisitions, or learn about endangered species and conservation efforts. Details are also provided on how to become a member of the San Diego Zoological society –*AN*

The Crest Guide
http://solstice.crest.org/online/aeguide/index.html

Crest is the Center for Renewable Energy and Sustainable Technology, and its site is a comprehensive guide to sustainable energy resources on the Internet. As expendable resources–like oil–are being depleted, solar, biomass, wind, and hydropower will become our power sources. Rather than waiting until the Energizer Bunny winds to a halt, you may as well learn about the progress in these areas right now. Let's face it, solar energy didn't go out of style with Jimmy Carter and mirrored sunglasses. Tomorrow, it may provide the juice for your computer. –*DP*

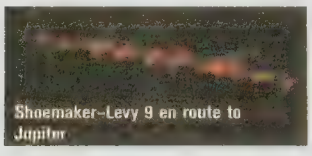
The Great Globe Gallery
http://hum.amu.edu.pl/~zbzw/glob/glob1.htm

This site consists of thematic and historical maps, planiglobes, and cartographic nets in various projections, as well as satellite images, icons, and artistic visions. Zbigniew Zwoliński's aim has been to collect images of the globe as a complement to education in earth sciences, geography, cartography, and geographic information systems, as well as to exhibit the diverse artistic renderings of the globe. You'll also find a wealth of detailed data on the earth's history, composition, and relation to other objects in the solar system. Photo credits and annotations are sometimes lacking, but overall this is a striking show.–*AN*

The Nine Planets
http://seds.lpl.arizona.edu/nineplanets/nineplanets/nineplanets.html

net rave

This site consists of about 60 pages, one for each major body in the solar system. A photo of each object appears in its page along with facts and links to related images elsewhere on the Internet. Meditate upon the Olympus Mons or map "the face" on Mars. The beauty of these


Shoemaker-Levy 9 en route to Jupiter

pages lies in their depth and humor, and the wild amount of links to stunning photographs and detailed facts that will thrill a wide range of viewers. For especially harried cybernauts, Webmaster Bill Arnett has even hyperlinked an "express tour" of the solar system. –*AN*

The Wonder of Physics
http://sprott.physics.wisc.edu/wop.htm

In 1984, the University of Wisconsin,

Edu-magic, courtesy of Professor Sprott

Madison began a program to turn on people of all ages and backgrounds to the astounding world of physical science. Presented by charismatic Professor Clint Sprott, The Wonder of Physics, a nerdy edu-magic show of sorts, plays at the campus periodically, and even tours the area. On the site, videotapes, lecture kits, and computer software are sold. In addition, some of the subjects Sprott covers are outlined, and interesting pictures of the professor's extravagant demonstrations are presented. But the site's one major flaw is obvious: The Wonder of Physics may be a fine treat if you're lucky enough to catch it live, but why not offer an online version for the world to enjoy? –*DP*

World Conservation Monitoring Centre
http://www.wcmc.org.uk/

net rave

W.C.M.C. provides information services on conservation efforts and the value of biodiversity, while helping others build their own info-management systems. Parts of its database can be accessed, including lists of threatened animals and protected parks, and a publications catalog. A scrollable menu prompts you to search a nation, revealing, for example, that Pakistan's snow leopard remains an endangered species. Furthermore, during "environmental emergencies," such as major fires or oil spills, this site has provided environmental information rapidly to support the efforts of ground operations. Simply excellent. –*AN*

shopping

CD Universe
http://www.cduniverse.com/

net rave

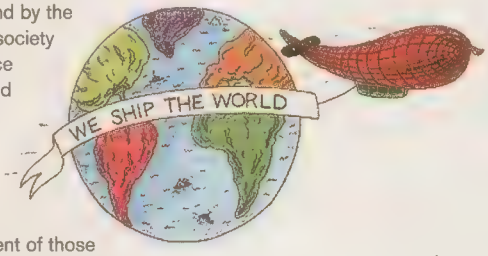
Ho, hum. Yet another online music store. CD Universe (which also carries audio and VHS tapes) boasts 180,000 items representing all types of music. You can browse their catalog by musical genre, including categories for Bubblegum, Dub, Jit, Mento, and Mpb. Or look up your favorite band with their search function. If you cater to the popular, see the latest best-selling charts. One unfortunate fact: "All orders must be entered online." They don't do fax, email, mail, or even walk-in orders. A good feature: When looking at a band's discography you can click on

Mo Hotta Mo Betta

http://www.mohotta.com

SITE of the MONTH Nov 96

Two dissimilar antidotes to the modern malaise have gained popularity in recent years: cigars and hot sauce. The cigar resurgence has been fueled in large part by celebrities like Arnold Schwarzenegger, Madonna, and Michael Richards ("Seinfeld"s Kramer), and taken up by a post-yupster generation hell-bent on enjoying the finer things even when they can't afford them. The (slightly narcotic) effect of a good cheroot on an existence made bland by the constraints of modern society is to make that existence even blander, to dull and soothe like a painkiller. By contrast, hot sauces, which are all the rage in the specialty gourmet market, are the accoutrement of those who seek to restore some edge to their lives. Face it: Just because your life has lost its piquancy doesn't mean your food has to.



Featuring products with intimidating names like Dave's Insanity Sauce, Pure Hell, and Endorphin Rush, the Mo Hotta Mo Betta company sells condiments that are sure to rekindle the fire in your belly. The sauces are made by small companies all over the world, and can be ordered from Mo Hotta via mail, e-mail, and telephone. Though the small operation has had a paper catalog since 1988, its Web site, designed by Studio G (**http://www.etropolis.com/studiog/index.html**) has really garnered it some attention.

Sporting a look like something from Crayola, the somewhat crude, yet engaging, artwork is consistent throughout. There are no photographs at all, in fact; even the product pictures are drawings.

The content of the site is ample and well-integrated. The splash page gives visitors an option between text and graphic versions, while the index breaks everything down into four simple subject areas: the catalog, an "About the Company," recipes, and a contest. The catalog is, of course, the most extensive part of the site. Each sauce has a humorous description that reads like the items in the J. Peterman catalog, only a little more whacked. The recipe section has a good many ideas for cooking with the sauces that Mo Betta sells–even recipes for desserts and beverages. A Bloody Mary sounds good, but a spicy hot peach pie?

The contest section features games of the "guess how many gumballs are in the jar" variety, with prizes that would make any hot food aficionado slather. How's about four pounds of Red Savino Chilies, eh? One a day would keep life interesting. –*WKC*

"Roots & Similar" to see similar bands. Maybe one of them plays Mento. Maybe not so ho-hum after all.–*JA*

Cyberian Outpost
http://www.cybout.com/cyberian.html

net rave

I got so caught up checking for computer hardware and software specials that I forgot what I was trying to do; namely, review this site. What the Cyberian Outpost lacks in quantity, it makes up for in quality. The philosophy here is that they don't sell anything that they don't evaluate first. Before offering an item for sale, they provide their "own objective editorial information." Some of the in-depth information

The specials'll keep you coming back

appears to have been lifted from press releases, though, so–as always–*caveat emptor*. There are screen shots, box shots, hardware requirements, and miscellaneous specs. The home page features a slew of specials (although the graphics make them look like banner ads) and links to other areas, such as the Mac and PC versions of the store and the Kid's Store. You can check the status of your order as well. I didn't order anything, but the specials will keep me coming back. –*JA*

Developer Depot
http://web.xplain.com/devdepot.com/sbcatalog.qry

Sponsored by *MacTech* magazine, Developer Depot is aimed at developers for the Macintosh OS. Although they sell at a discount, their site exists only to sell, sell, sell their hundreds of products. There are no FAQs, no games, no outside links, no frills, no fun, and absolutely nothing for free. Want to know what that "Arnold Jr." t-shirt or those "Debug boxers" from the clothing and accessories section look like? You're out of luck. Clothes are not described or pictured. But if you want a programming textbook or a runtime engine, these folks will sell you one for cheap. –*GB*

Great American Rose Company
http://garoses.com/

All roses, all the time. The Great American Rose Company grows and ships roses directly from "The Rose City," Madison, New Jersey. Using their online catalog, you can choose from a somewhat small selection of rose bouquets and get them

Mind the thorns

shipped fresh from their farm to yours. You can also smother your sweetheart with roses by buying a dozen roses every month for a year. Once you receive your bouquet come back here to learn how to make them last longer and to prevent that affliction known as droopy roses. To order, use their secure online order form or just call or fax it in. –*JA*

Internet Shopping Network
http://www.internet.net

net rave

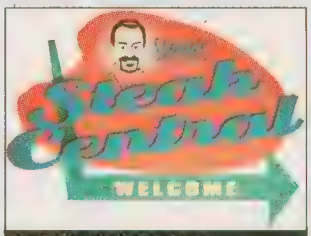
From the creators of TV's Home Shopping Network comes ISN, which sells computer software and hardware. They boast over 35,000 computer products and offer free membership to all. They have weekly specials, contests, and secure shopping with Netscape or Microsoft's IE. The search option comes in handy, allowing you to search by product name or manufacturer. It even tells you when something is out of stock. All that's missing are those unctuous HSN hosts hawking their wares. –*JA*

Notebooks.com
http://www.notebooks.com/

Do you know the difference between active matrix and dual passive screens? Planning on purchasing a notebook computer? Here, they offer a three-step effort. First, learn all about laptops. Then click and choose your price, the configurations you need, and the options you want, and voila, you get a list of computers that best match your needs. Last, choose your computer model and enter your contact information so someone can contact you to discuss the purchase. No online ordering. There are, however, links to computer manufacturers and a resource for laptop accessories. Overall, a very informative and easy-to-use site. –*JA*

Steve's Steak Central
http://www.bestbeef.com/

Steve from Steve's Steak Central isn't just talking ordinary steaks, here. He's talking "inspirational steaks." All the steaks he sells are "Certified Angus Beef" by the American Angus Association. (The AAA, I've learned here, certifies only the best steaks). And not just beef; pork, veal, and lamb as well. Besides buying meat, you can browse through their menus and recipes. You can even get tips on meat freezing, thawing, and recommended cooking techniques. Of course, inspiring beef doesn't come cheap; expect to pay a premium for these choice cuts. –*JA*



Beef. It's what's for dinner

T-Line Design
http://www.t-shirtoutlet.com/

net rave

This site uses frames, cute animated buttons, very heavy graphics, and it requires Netscape. In fact my MS Internet Explorer couldn't handle the JavaScripts. They sell t-shirts here (of 100% heavy pre-shrunk cotton) with themes like: Gags, Kimba, Blur, Satire, Americana Humor, Beer, and more. Their Reminder Service sends you e-mail to remind you of special occasions–like *Cinco de Mayo* or Bastille Day–eight days in advance. I have to remember to buy a Bob's Big Boy shirt for that friend of mine with a fondness for the fat little carnivore in the checkered overalls. What a great way to celebrate independence! –*JA*

The Cookie Connection
http://www.soupweb.com/cookie/

net rave

The Cookie Connection's logo, a scary, evil-faced clown, greets when you enter. It also appears as the not-so-subtle background picture. Founder Paul Goeltz says, "It's fun. It's a real high. I'm really into what I do." "Come again?" The story is this: Paul, a Dead-head, wanted to sell something at Grateful Dead concerts. Synapse fires, light bulb goes on, and he decides to begin the Cookie Connection. It appears they sell "Oatmeal-Chocolate Chip-Raisin-Banana Cookies." Sounds like one big chockful o' taste cookie to me. Shipped Next Day, 2nd Day, or regular mail. –*JA*

The Used Computer Mall
http://www.usedcomputer.com

You can't get much more focused than this. There are *no* graphics–none, zero, zip, nada. If you're looking to buy or sell used computer equipment, this is may be a resource. It works like this: People come to read and place ads for used computer equipment. It's free to post ads, and they run for about a week. Click for the newest postings. All kinds of equipment are listed: RAM, hard drives, computer systems, notebooks, printers, even some software. When you see something you're interested in, e-mail or call the person directly. There's also information on auctions, shows, swap meets, and other organizations that deal with used or refurbished equipment. It's hard to know, of course, whether people are really conducting business here, so it may warrant caution. –*JA*

Virtual Vineyards
http://www.virtualvin.com/

net rave

For virtual epicures

Virtual Vineyards has branched out. Besides selling wine, they have a food shop where they sell pasta, condiments, coffee, tea, candy, and more. If you're new to wine and don't know a Cabernet Sauvignon from a Gewurztraminer, take their tour. Then try their recommendations and samplers. Not only do they take American Express, but also Visa, MasterCard and CyberCash. You can join Peter's e-mail list, (that's VV's founder Peter Granoff, who is a renowned wine connoisseur) for the latest on wine. Overall, there is a positive vibe here that doesn't insult the wine-ignorant while managing to cater to the aficionado. –*JA*

sports

Boycott Major League Baseball!
http://www.cybergate.com/~morris/nomlb.htm

An impassioned plea by a disgruntled ex-fan to bring down the system that has perverted America's game. In well-written and well-reasoned prose, the author slams the greedy owners, the spoiled players, and exposes the callous disregard both have shown fans of MLB. He campaigns hard for college and minor league teams as the real embodiment of sport for its own sake, rather than a showcase for the prima donnas who run in the majors. What can I say? I love this site; every single venom-spittin', slap-in-the-face, grudge-holdin', Marge Schott-dissin', Albert Belle-hatin', run-around-the-bases-till-you're-dizzy-and-puke sentence in this site is just perfect. –*DA*

Climbing Online
http://www.climbing.com

net rave

The magazine of the vertical persuasion

CONTENT	AESTHETIC MERIT	TECHNO SMARTNESS
Runneth over	A looker	Brilliant
Half-empty	Not half bad	Aglow
Dry	A dog	Dim

Once the pastime of a handful of reckless adventurers, climbing has gone mainstream. With climbing walls in most metropolitan areas and trips to Everest for sale to any weekend warrior with enough cash, the sport's practitioners are equal parts nature-lover and yuppie. *Climbing* magazine has been there since 1970, trying to keep up with changing circumstances and shifting audiences, while maintaining their ties to the purity of the sport. The site demonstrates a smooth transition. Classy, informative, and with a great respect both for their readers and the mountain experience, this is the site for climbing on the Web. –*DA*

Go Ski!
http://www.goski.com

Go Ski is more travel agent than skiing zine. Everywhere you turn, it's resorts, resorts, resorts, indexed by country, by region, by snow conditions, even employment opportunities. There's even a damned resort search engine. You'll also find plenty of weather info and random travel tips (where to stay, where to party, etc.). You have to be more persistent to find the essays on the skiing life, but this is the real heart of Go Ski!. Equipment reviews, how to join the National Ski Patrol, etc. All good fun. Go Ski! is more geared to the ski bum than the casual skier, which just means you can trust what they're saying. –*DA*

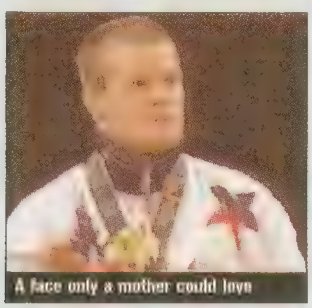
Husker News
http://www.net-link.net/~fricke/home.htm

Covering all news pertaining to the two-time NCAA champion Nebraska Huskies, this site provides a wealth of information for the dedicated fan. Aside from all the usual stats and prognostications, the best feature of the Husker News is the Video Marketplace, a sort of Huskies-only classifieds where tapes of past games are advertised and traded. I was surprised at how many people were looking for obscure 1984 football games. There aren't many graphics or any high-tech gadgetry to speak of, but it's clear these guys love their team. And judging from the traffic on here, that's all it took to fill a niche. –*DA*

InterMat
http://www.intermatwrestle.com

net rave

InterMat is trying to turn the sports Web site into a profit-making venture. They may just have the formula right. InterMat offers plenty for the browser/customer to look at, including state-by-state amateur round-ups, upcomng events, profiles, and job classifieds. But it seemed like every other page had an ad; whether it was selling shoes (cheap!) or home wrestling equipment, InterMat has all the bases covered. Updated regularly, almost daily in fact, InterMat is likely to catch the eye of amateur coaches around the country looking for prospects, looking for work, buying equipment. Wow, someone may actually be making money from the Internet! –*DA*


A face only a mother could love

International Hockey League
http://www.theihl.com

To think that I made it this far without any inkling that something like the International Hockey League even existed! And these ain't no scrubs, has-beens, or wanna-bes; the IHL is widely regarded as

In a league of its own

the second-best league in the world. What's more, the league pioneered the four-quarter game and the television-enhanced puck, while boasting the first black head coach and the first woman to ever play pro hockey. This site is a whole lot of fun, with weekly giveaways, plus all the stats, schedules, etc., you can bear. Keep up with all the season's hockey action right here. –*DA*

La Jolla Surfing
http://facs.scripps.edu/surf/surfing.html

net rave

If you believe the stereotypes, you can't imagine a bunch of surfers could put together such a good site. This one is on the money, balancing an impressive amount of tech-savvy with old-fashioned, informative writing. There are digital satellite weather maps and wave sensors, so you can check conditions at your favorite beach before you go. There's also a generous amount of how-to stuff, along with equipment and multimedia reviews. Most impressive perhaps is the Respect the Beach Project, a sort of environmental initiative to protect the surfer's playground. The only drawback is the limited California focus (with brief forays south to Baja, Costa Rica, and the like); every region should have a page this good. –*DA*

If everybody had an ocean...

Raider Nation
http://members.aol.com/jimbokli/jimbo/raiders.htm

This is the home page for the Raiders football fan who just wouldn't feel right if they weren't shirtless and painted come game time. We're talking rabid fans commiserating with other rabid fans about their team in Oakland, "the football Mecca of the world" ("FACE WEST AND CHANT 'RAIDERS RULE!'"). You understand the attitude we're dealing with here? Besides checking out stats, rosters, and commentary on everything from training camp to the layout of the new stadium, you'll find an homage to past championship seasons, and a definition of the "Raider Mystique." Also get your official Raider Nation gear, including beer mugs, shirts, and caps. Sure it only comes in

Raider Mystique, Raider Nation, Raider ... Religion?

black, but it will look great with a leather jacket and a motorcycle. A great page, damn it all, 'cause people just don't take sports seriously enough these days. –*DA*

Redsox.com
http://www.redsox.com

net rave

This site has got everything you'd expect a major league site to have, including box scores, player bios, and game updates after every pitch. Then there are the extras: a photo tour of Fenway, a video game, and profiles of the club's legendarily loyal fans. You really get the sense that this team has a special relationship with its city, something to be appreciated in this day and age. Red Sox history is all about nostalgia–the epic seasons, the famous runs, the heroic players–but this

BoSox go digital

To some people, video and computer games are a matter of life and death.

To others, they are much more important than that.

NEXT GENERATION ONLINE
Come home.

next-generation.com

The World's #1 computer and video game news site, brought to you by the World's #1 computer and video game magazine.

NEXT GENERATION
Smart people get it.

GNN Travel Center

http://bin-1.gnn.com/gnn/meta/travel/

Real travel, ideally, is more footloose and shambling than tourism. Travel is humbler in means, tourism an extravagance. Tourists tick off sights like chores on a "to do" list–now the Coliseum, now the Piazza San Marco; been there, done that. Travelers, by contrast, wake to consider the map over coffee. Where to today? South, across the border, or east to the mountains? Maybe nowhere; after all, you just got there. Maybe you'll make a day of chatting up the locals, shopping for gri gris...or doing f@#$ all, if it suits you. An excellent site, GNN's Travel Center seems to straddle this distinction, at the considerable risk of alienating both camps.

Content is everything on these pages, which are laid out against white backgrounds, the table of contents almost entirely void of graphics. There's no shortage of images, however–Alison Wright's photo essay on Tibet is excellent, as is Linda Connor's Labyrinth–but these reside in deeper territory, and there's no overall design to unify the features. It's a minor shortcoming, though, more than compensated for by the quality of the writing, interviews, and resource information housed here.

You'd be hard-pressed, for example, to find better travel writing than the prominently featured essays by renowned Welsh author Jan Morris. Morris's pieces, and the lengthy interview with writer/naturalist Peter Mattheissen, should be enough to lure any armchair traveler from the Barcalounger. The lesser known writers are also worth reading; if they're not exactly household names, neither are they rank amateurs.

The editor's notes operate, loosely, as an index to a variety of Web-based resources for travelers, with links and commentary organized under an array of themes ranging from online mapping services to online guides to Copenhagen. It's a good bookmark for anyone interested in keeping up with the latest resources on out-of-the-way places.

One odd feature of the site, however, that threatens to nudge the project into the league of more mannered journals like *CondeNast Traveler*, is the rather large section devoted to food and wine. While the writing in the section is good (Bob Thompson's notes on everything from Chilean Reds to shi shi Champagnes showed a refreshing knack for cutting to the chase), the material here is both frivolous and out of place. Culinary angles on subjects like the Chinese diaspora strained to bring the subject back into the fold, but, even then...

My gripes aside, the Travel Center is a good thing. Hopefully, it will evolve into a showcase for the best travel writing and resources on the Web, and not become the online equivalent of the Sunday travel section. *–PJ*

site projects a confidence that the greatest days are still to come. The perpetual pennant race, the decades spent pursuing the World Championship, it all makes for a very interesting baseball history. *–DA*

travel

Being There

http://www/valpro.com/cgibin/var/valpro/bethere

net rave

Now, from the drudgery of your desk job, you can visit Gary Valle's site, where the experienced hiker, mountaineer, and traveler has gathered some of his most spectacular photographs for you to ogle at. The photos are all beautiful, the kind that make you jealous and long for a vacation, but they aren't the only attraction at this great site. Most shots are accompanied by notes, sometimes providing context, sometimes a geographical aside, and often random musings on the landscape. Valle's writing, as you might expect, is very down-to-earth, hip to the pleasures of traveling, and seeing nature at its best. He wants you to get out there yourself, to prod you into getting up and going outside. It works; but until you save up enough money to take time off, follow Gary Valle's site and live vicariously, Walter Mitty-style. *–DA*

California Travel Parks Association

http://www.campgrounds.com/ctpa/

Primarily a home base for members of the C.T.P.A, most of whom are campground or RV-park owners, this site lets you find any campground in the west (whose owner is a member). Click on the tag for California, Nevada, or Oregon, and you can search by region, city name, campground name, accommodations, etc. Because there are 500 listings, chances are you'll find the place you're looking for. If you're a member of the C.T.P.A, the Professional Services page puts you in touch with all the other members. The site is not much to look at, but it will help you get to places that offer a more impressive view. *–ES*

Go Europe.com

http://www.goeurope.com

If you're looking for help planning a trip to the Continent, welcome to Go Europe.com, brought to you by the European Travel Commission. With a comprehensive and searchable Events Calendar, you can plan your trip around seasonal happenings, or hear from folks who've been there and back. Ask questions and swap photos in the Travelers Forum; get the specs on the 26 member countries of the European Travel Commission in Gateway to Europe. Though not aimed at the budget traveler and lacking accommodations listings, Go Europe.com is useful in providing background information and a general orientation to most European destinations (Russia-bound travelers look elsewhere). *–ES*

Homer, Alaska

http://akms.com/htguide/

Homer, Alaska, the halibut capital of the world, was named after a '49er who helped settle the town. Homer's Web site is a recreation and tourism guide for this Kachemak Bay town, "where the road ends, and the sea begins." There's more to do in Homer than you might suspect: The Homer Jackpot Halibut Derby, clamming, kayaking, hiking, sailing, and all of this

in an area that combines Eskimo, Dena'ina Indian, and Russian history. Don't worry if you can't make it all the way to Alaska; this Web site is a worthwhile read on its own. *–ES*

MCW International Travelers Clinic

http://www.intmed.mcw.edu/travel.html

The MCW International Travelers Clinic is a bankload of information, providing links to all manner of international health organiza-

CONTENT	AESTHETIC MERIT	TECHNO SMARTNESS
Runneth over	A looker!	Brilliant
Half-empty	Not half bad	Aglow
Dry	A dog	Dim

tions and bulletins: U.S. State Dept. travel warnings, W.H.O. info, and even the C.I.A World Factbook. When you're dealing with the down and dirty of your life in a foreign locale, you may just need answers to questions like: Where can I turn if I get beriberi? Links like resources to The Moon Travel Handbook could help you stay healthy in Asia, Africa, and Latin America, and Travel Health Online provides country profiles and locates travel medical providers. A great resource for travelers and health-curious stay-at-homes alike. *–ES*

Paris-Anglophone

http://paris-anglo.com/index.html

net rave

Are you Parisian and homesick? Or an American Francophile? Either way, you're sure to enjoy yourself on the Paris-Anglophone. Here you'll find complete and nicely arrayed listings for everything you'd want to do, see, or know about the "City of Lights." Whether your interest is business, pleasure, or a combination of the two, you'll want to check out cafe listings, classifieds, and Paris-Zoom, an interactive photographic journey through the city. Search the Paris-Anglophone directory, with 4200 listings for English-speaking Paris, convert e-mail into French, or see an art exhibit. Come to think of it, I had more fun, met friendlier people, and spent much less cash on the Anglophone than on my last visit to Paris.... *–ES*

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paris-anglo.com
All your contacts for Business & Pleasure in France
Take a Stroll Down Champs Elysees
Send a letter to Paris
Paris Classifieds
and our other cultural/visual offerings
Paris, minus the French

Roam

http://www.roam.org/

net rave

An online travel zine, Roam is a great resource for intrepid wayfarers who like to travel on the rough, and hear tales from those doing the same. You can read daily travelogues from Roam writers who've gone forth to cover all manner of locales. Hear from a twosome who cruised the French Riviera sleeping in their car, another pair touring a Slovenian squat, or get the scoop from Pamplona on the Running of the Bulls. Roam can also help you locate a friend or item you might've lost on your journey, and put you in touch with others who are going your way. *–ES*

For travel on the rough

Vagabond Monthly

http://www2.globaldialog.com/~tpatmaho/

If you're in the market for some great travel stories, tales of the tortured and amused, head for Vagabond Monthly. Here you'll be entertained by confessions of urban campers, spiritual quests to Bakersfield, monkey's caught in trees in Barbados, and an ode to Greyhound. Written with good humor throughout, Vagabond Monthly revels in the tragicomedy of travel. Even the letters page is a good read. Links to a site called Flifo, a great resource for low airfares. If you've got a travel story to tell, this is the place; otherwise, sit back and enjoy these strange but true yarns from the road. *–ES*

Here Chim-Chim

Web Surfer Travel Journal

http://edge.edge.net/~dphillip/

This densely packed and well-linked zine combines just about every travel resource you can think of with interviews and some darn good writing. Dan Phillip, editor/publisher, is a 20-year exotic travel veteran with lots of good stories of his own. He's collected a slew of travelogues and tales from other wanderers, useful travel guides (check out Lonely Planet), maps, exploration outfits, and travel magazines. The Web Surfer Travel Journal is a dangerous place for those of us with itchy feet; if you haven't been bitten by the bug before you visit, you're sure catch it while you're here. *–ES*

WebFlyer

http://www.insideflyer.com/

WebFlyer is geared to frequent flyers: how to get more miles and how to use them. This zine is the online synthesis of Frequent Flyer Services (FFS), a company that conceives, develops, and mar-

Entropy8

http://www.entropy8.com/

SITE of the MONTH Nov 96

Taking the screen shots here, I felt a little bit like the hiker who, aiming his camera at a panoramic mountain sunset, despairs at the futility his effort. Perhaps that's waxing a little too reverent...but not much. Entropy8, the "labor of love and frustration" of Auriea Harvey, a young designer who just happens to be black and female, is a masterwork, and simply the most creative example of Web design I've seen. It's a little crude, then, to classify this page under "vanity." The real vanity will be in trying to express just how wonderful the site is.

As much a marvel of programming as it is of design, the site is tricked out with animated gifs, a truly graceful use of Frames, and some expert Java scripting. It's a high-bandwidth affair, of course, and she knows it. But if you're willing, it's worth the wait. Follow her instructions on the home page and turn off the tool bar. You won't need it; the site spawns a separate, graphical menu to facilitate navigation. A nice artifice, it dazzles without overshadowing the design.

Thematically, the site is part riff on chaos, part private showcase. "So here is the dream," Miss Harvey writes at the outset, "It is what it is. This site is my personal experiment with a personal goal in a public space." So it is. A section called "The Disease Manifesto" is an artful exploration of angst—not angst in any watered-down form, either, but the real thing, the sickness unto death. The tone is dark but not despairing.

> had that the glassy lake and white high Alps were

Her family is prominently featured elsewhere on the site, in a disarmingly candid and dignified way. Some of the clan contribute their writings. Grandma just goofs around with the camera. Musing on the lives of her forbears, she writes a little mournfully, "These pictures were taken before I was born or too early in my life for me to remember. The course those lives took shaped me more than I want to admit."

Now, depending on my mood, that sort of thing could come off sounding self-indulgent and over-serious, but a closer look reveals a lively and self-deprecating wit beneath it all. In her gallery of notebook covers—each one a work of art in itself—I spied this passage written in faded ink: "Chaos is still my Life. This is my Life. This is my mind. I design Reality. We design the future. This is kind of a stupid thing to say, but I say it anyway. This is the cover of a sketch book and I want to completely cover this with words. But as usual I don't know what to write. I guess I could lapse into my old quotations phase. Quoth Aaron: 'I'd rather be insane than stupid. But I'd rather be neither than both.' Quoth Bill...." It goes on and on like that, without ever really filling the page. And I like that; don't ask me why, but I like that very much.

In the end, this page is self-expression, plain and simple, and how much you cotton to it will probably depend on what you make of the personality behind it. Clearly I liked her very much. In a cacophony of voices, hers rings true. *–PJ*

kets products and services for frequent travelers. Randy Peterson, a "frequent flyer guru," shares a host of mile-earning programs with you, and includes reviews to make the choice easier. InfoFlyer lets you sign up with whatever service you choose while online. The site is repetitive graphically, and not too exciting textually, but if you're flummoxed by the world of amassed mileage, it's worth a visit. *–ES*

vanity

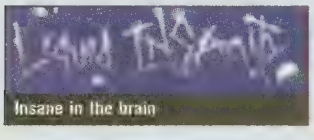
E. Jean Carroll
http://www.askejean.com/

A Dan Savage for the straight (and square), E. Jean Carroll has a sexual advice column in the pages of *Elle* magazine called Ask E. Jean. The former Miss Cheerleader U.S.A. specializes in a kind of coy drollery (punctuated ad nauseum with false familiarities,

like "deary" and "darling") that manges to be patronizing, offensive, and fatuous all at the same time. Of course, if you write to her with your problems, then you deserve what you get. Then too, she's not as bad as so many others of her ilk. All the same, her gray little page smacks of insincerity and makes her notoriety, however minor, seem totally unwarranted. Excerpts of her columns and pitches for her book are about the extent of the content. *–PJ*

Liquid Insanity
http://users.visi.net/icculus/

I'm not really sure what the significance of "Liquid Insanity" is, but it's the alias of



hacker/geek Adam, and this is his Web site. The graphic quality of the site is quite good, with letters fashioned out of mercury and a zingy textured background. Other highlights are "Bill Gates is Satan!," which offers concrete numerological proof that Bill Gates is indeed Old Scratch himself, and "Your Child is a Hacker," a list for parents to help them determine whether their child is a hacker. (Note to Adam: you should add "can't spell" to this list.) *–RS*

Reverie
http://www.walrus.com/~jerd/reverie/page1.html

I wanted to like Reverie. The opening page is simple and elegant, with a camera and notebook side by side on a black background. Click on the camera, and view black-and-white photographs, many of which are quite artistic. However, click on the "dream journal," and it's another story. It's a known fact that dreams are infinitely fascinating to the dreamer (and maybe their psychiatrist), but incredibly boring to everyone else. Who wants to read, in minute detail, the dreams of a total stranger about whom you know nothing? Without any context or discussion of personal revelation, it's self-indulgent and soporific. *–RS*

Scott's House of Cheese
http://www.europa.com/~scottycs/

Remember the cheese shop sketch from the Flying Circus? Scott C. Smith's House of Cheese is sort of like that: no cheese anywhere in sight. Select one of two versions: Full Cheese or Low Fat, "now with less glug." When I tried, either choice gave me the same thing: a small but diverse collection of links, and none of them as cheesy as the scrolling message bar would have you believe.

Links are in place to such sites as The Late Show, Duke Nuke Em, The Defense Information School (Scott's alma mater), and InfoSeek–nothing too cheesy there. Even Scott's own movie reviews are earnest and straightforward, if not exactly inspired. I guess there's something to that old adage, excuse me, ad: "It ain't easy bein' cheesy." *–PJ*

The Aesthete's List
http://www.acsu.buffalo.edu/~dward/

The Aesthete's List, Diane Ward's home page, is dedicated to art, poetry, philosophy, and other cerebral subjects. An obvious bibliophile (her day job is cataloguer at the SUNY Buffalo library), she has assembled an impressive collection of links related to poetry, novels, art, artists, international news, culture, and the environment. Graphics clearly aren't priority number one, and there is an overly serious, almost prissy tone to the site, but aesthete's everywhere will find it a good jumping-off place into the more academic world on the Internet. *–RS*

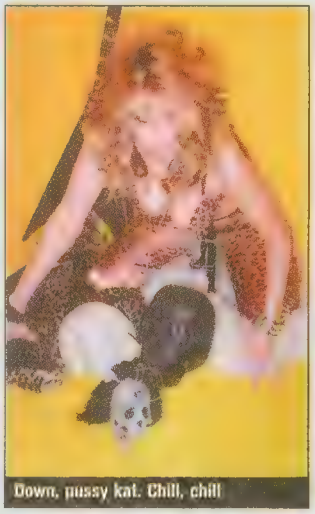
The Couch
http://www.castboy.com/menu.html

Welcome to The Couch, Castboy's guide to Hollywood Babylon. Unofficially, that is. Billy Damota, a.k.a. Castboy, is–you guessed it–a casting agent. In Hollywood, no less. As such, the main

course here seems to be a lot of grainy snapshots of our host and various luminaries, from Arnold Schwarznegger to Morton Downey, Jr. Not exactly the company I'd want to keep, but, hey, what the hell. Quite a chameleon, Castboy is, sporting a new look for every occasion. Beyond that, the page is one big indulgence (in keeping with the Vanity category), unfortunately marked by a lame sense of humor. To wit, the section called Women Who Have Pissed Me Off. I know it's a joke, Billy. It's just not very funny. *–PJ*

The Great Kat
http://www.greatkat.com/

Does The Great Kat always wander the streets dressed in leather underwear and covered in fake blood, or is this just her day job? Is The Great Kat really God? These and other questions come to mind while browsing her highness's Web site. Looking like a cross between Ozzy Osbourne and Courtney Love, this Juilliard graduate turned heavy metal guitar soloist/S&M she-witch hawks her CDs, posters, and lacy panties to masochists everywhere (I mean that).



Check out the lyrics to some of her best-known tunes, "Kat-Abuse" and "Ultra-Dead," and worship at the High Priestess of Guitar Shred's cyber-alter, or else! *–RS*

The Macintosh Funnies
http://www.wolfenet.com/~pminer/

Our host, Pete Miner, on Bill Gates: "Big deal. I'd have 18 billion dollars too if I owned Microsoft!" Pete's a cut-up, see, and his material, such as it is, all revolves around computers; or, rather, Macintosh vis-à-vis Microsoft. Is this fertile ground for comedy? Pete obviously thinks so. And, since I suspect Pete is a very nice, well-meaning guy (as are most bores), I'll let you be the judge. Pete tries his hand at all manner of comic monologue here, including a little Vogon poetry and a semi-clever self interview. Family members contribute to his online follies as well. So judge for yourself, but I think you'll agree that the line I quoted at the beginning is as good as it gets. And how good is that? *–PJ*

webtech

Anonymous Surfing
http://www.anonymizer.com/

net rave

Worried that Big Brother is watching you? Surfing to naughty sites you'd rather not be connected with? The Anonymizer will allay your fears by allowing you to

CONTENT	AESTHETIC MERIT	TECHNO SMARTNESS
Runneth over	A looker	Brilliant
Half-empty	Not half bad	Aglow
Dry	A dog	Dim

surf anonymously. In the simplest terms, it works as a proxy, The Anonymizer acting as a liaison, whereby all documents go through a "middleman" server before making their way to you. Don't understand all the fuss? Check out the sobering demonstration in Snoop, which instantly pinpoints the type of computer you have, the browser you are using, the location of your service provider, and the last site you visited. *–RS*

Cable Modem

http://members.aol.com/aakamine/cablemodem/index.html

net rave

The true story of a guy and his high-speed cable modem, the site describes one person's experience with the installation, use, and maintenance of a high-speed cable modem. Site features include friendly, accessible graphics, simple descriptions of hardware and software set-up, and illustrative comparisons (a shareware demo of Quake that takes 40 minutes to download with a 28.8 modem takes 2.5 minutes to download with the cable modem). Sounds intriguing, and if your cable company has the capability (not many do yet) it's worth checking into before purchasing your next modem. *–RS*

Easy-Submit

http://www.vault.pair.com/easy-submit.html

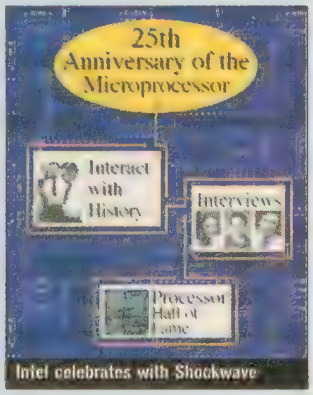
net rave

This is the best site I've seen for submitting your URL. It's free, it's easy, and that ain't bad. In a nutshell, this site uses Frames to let you go back and forth quickly to dozens of search engines, newsgroups, and award pages. If you have your information ready to copy and paste (the URL, a description of your site in 30 words or less, and an e-mail address) then go here. You'll save a lot of time and won't have to pay someone to do it for you. *–RS*

Intel's 25th Anniversary of the Microprocessor

http://www.intel.com/intel/museum/25anniv/shock/index.htm

net rave



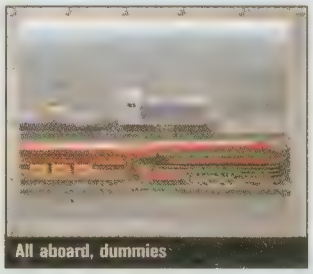
Intel celebrates with Shockwave

Although the title makes this site sound like a geekfest extraordinaire, Intel has a really fascinating bit of history to share here, and the site takes advantage of Shockwave to render the content smooth and compelling. The Interactive section is the most fascinating part of the site, a sort of game where you join the founders of Intel and find out what decisions they made in the late 1960s with regards to their revolutionary product. The Shockwave animations are excellent, the technology at its best. As a model for instructional Web sites, there are few to match it. *–WKC*

Internet Learning Tour

http://pavilion.baynetworks.com/pavilion/depot.html

This is an elaborate and intricately rendered promotional piece for manufacturers of hardware who want to make it visually clear exactly what they do: make routers, servers, and switches for the Internet. To do so they've adopted a serviceable metaphor: A freight train carries information down railways to switching stations, back and forth between (computer) depots. The easiest way to view the panels is to follow their paginated tutorial; alternatively you can download 6-meg self-running animated files (nothing better to do with your online time?). The site was a bit slow for my patience, but nice enough to look at. *–SL*


All aboard, dummies

NetTracker

http://www.net-tracker.com/

Your own Web-searching valet? Nothing beats the human mind for filtering and parsing data, and NetTracker takes advantage of that very fact. Its commercial service puts actual humans to the task of doing your search for you, and tossing out the dross (goodbye "404 File Not Found" errors). As a purist I probably wouldn't entrust my Web search to anyone, and I'd miss the serendipity of interesting near-misses, but I suppose for dry research on a deadline, it could be worth the hefty fees (up to $20 an hour). *–PJ*

Read to Me

http://www.pixi.com/~reader1/

Read To Me, sponsored by The Hawaii Education Literacy Project, is a Windows-based application that allows Windows Clipboard, Microsoft Word,

Webmonkey

http://www.webmonkey.com

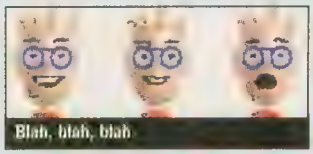
SITE of the MONTH Nov 96

Introducing Webmonkey, another signature HotWired venture put together by 14 hip, young South of Market-eers. Webmonkey tempts all you strung-out HTML junkies with all the latest fixes to amp up your Web sites and home pages. With something like the weekend garage mechanic approach, Webmonkey delivers nuts and bolts in the form of straightforward how-tos. That is, if you can make it past the Java-enhanced front page. I crashed twice from work, once from home. Which makes me wonder why Jeffery Veen (Webmaster monkey, columnist, and HotWired Interface Director) integrated a relatively hefty Java applet on the front page while, in his column, voicing apprehensions about whether or not Netscape Navigator 3.0 will be a stable Java Client. Given the choice between hip technology or functional technology...well, the HotWired gang is known for screaming mach 5 down the hipster highway.

Putting design issues aside, this is prime real estate for bookmarking. These columns have saved me hours of nail-biting, head-scratching, and wading through swamps of HTML, shareware, and poorly written ReadMe files. Jill Atkinson demonstrates how to use Frames using the down-to-earth metaphor of a picnic plate to represent her subject: chicken in one frame, pasta in another, etc. Emily Tucker tutors visitors on the finer points of slimming and trimming GIF animations, reiterating the stance that "small images are surely a Webmonkey's most prized possession." Put on your post-modern goggles for a peek at generative art using JavaScript, and post your thoughts and feedback to the ongoing threaded discussions. The threaded discussions are a crucial element of Webmonkey, giving the site its pulse. Each column has a designated thread. See right through Transparency? Any animation tricks up your sleeve? Think Navigator 3.0 blows? Discovered a useful plug-in? Well, then, here's your soapbox.

Last on the list of perks is the Webmonkey tune up, which tests your browser for Web surfing essentials. Right now, the recommended beach bag includes Frames, Java, and a few select plug-ins.

Webmonkey is a site by developers, for developers. If you want a quick understanding of the mechanics behind the Web and ways to improve your own online projects, park your browser in HotWired's new grease shop for an hour or two. They'll get you running smooth. *–HS*


Blah, blah, blah

ASCII files, and Internet sites to be read aloud by a talking head (in English or Hawaiian). Is it just me, or does it seem a bit ironic that a literacy organization developed something that allows people to not read? At any rate, this is an interesting idea that could increase the interactive potential of Web sites, should it gain widespread appeal. Additional features include a dictionary, adjustable speed and pitch, and links to 482 Project Gutenberg classic works. –*RS*

The Bandwidth Conservation Society
http://www.infohiway.com/faster/index.html

net rave

The Bandwidth Conservation Society is committed to reducing bandwidth requirements across the Internet. BCS's Web site is well-presented and graphically pleasing. It does only one thing, and does it well. The writing is tailored to a range of experience levels: It's not too technical but treats the subject with considerable depth, providing good illustrations of how to, say, reduce GIF sizes. This is a good place to spend some time if you're thinking of putting up a site, or haven't yet streamlined your existing page. –*RS*

Webreference.com
http://www.webreference.com/

net rave

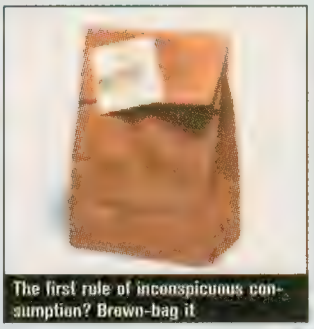
Webreference, sponsored by Athenia Associates, is a must-see (and required bookmark) for Web developers, programmers, writers, enthusiasts, and anyone else creating content for the Web. "Developer's Corner" is one-stop shopping for tips on programming with HTML, optimizing graphics, Frames, GIF animation, VRML, image maps, Java, etc. "Web Headlines" makes excellent use of Frames to allow users to search a number of Internet news sites for information about specific topics or general browsing. Feature articles on programming in Java and HTML 3.0, as well as less technical issues such as "What Makes a Great Web Site," are insightful and thought-provoking. –*RS*

zines

Beer Frames
http://www.core77.com/beerframe/index.html

net rave

Here's a site based on a print column "which examines a variety of products


The first rule of inconspicuous consumption? Brown-bag it

and services–some unusual, many exceedingly ordinary, but all worthy of close inspection." So says Paul Lucas, author of Beer Frames, the Journal of Inconspicuous Consumption. And if you like consumerism at its weirdest, this is the place to be. Myself, I don't get it. Either Mr. Lucas has an abundance of free time or he's just unnaturally preoccupied with senseless commercial products. He's hip to the absurdity, mind you, of products such as toasting bread–that is, bread made exclusively for toasting–aerosol lawn make-up, and canned whole chicken, and, as such, the site may well be an attempt at deconstruction. However, I found the product reviews preposterously overwrought for subject matter so frivolous. Of course, who am I to talk? I review Web sites for a living. –*PJ*

Exploded View
http://members.tripod.com/~eXploded_view/index.htm

"All form, no content," this classic zine is just one big, senseless, toss-off by the site's self-conscious creator, Mark Watson, an Oregonian with a day job, a sideline in clip art (some free samples here), and a pretty decent sense of humor. No content? Well, not much. Not much form, either, for that matter. Just

More fun than a broken jaw

style. If you like that style, you can order the paper version, six bucks for 10 issues. Either way, not much to keep you here at the electronic version. Follow links to other zines of a similar bent. –*PJ*

George Jr.
http://www.georgejr.com/

net rave

The best that could have happened to George Jr. did happen: *George* magazine, John F. Kennedy, Jr.'s big-time political rag, slapped a cease-and-desist order on the zine for alleged copyright infringement. I think I've got that right. To his credit, George Myers, Jr., the beleaguered editor, has not made much of the whole brouhaha, aside from a few editorials in the latest release having to do with trademark law–none of them written by him. Mr. Myers' casual attitude in the face of John John's attacks has, however, won him something of a following. That's good. He deserves it. An eclectic, thoughtful literary zine that looks at topics outside the ordinary, George Jr. is a good mark by which to judge all the rest. This is self-publication at it's best. –*PJ*

You, can't keep a good man down

Gray Areas
http://w3.gti.net/grayarea/gray2.htm

Here it is straight from the horse's maw: "Gray Areas exists to examine the gray

A catalog of the deviant and sordid

areas of life. We explore subject matter which is illegal, immoral, and/or controversial. We hope to unite people involved in all sorts of alternative lifestyles and deviant subcultures." True to it's mission statement, this zine puts its shoulder to the wheel with stories and articles on folks out on the margins: porno stars, hackers, prisoners, junkies, etc. Still, it's not as far out on the edge as it fancies itself. Writing was all over the place, from snoozy concert reviews to compelling stories like "Heroin's Tale" and essays with titles like "I'm a Vegetarian...In Love with a Butcher." –*PJ*

HillsWeb
http://mcweb.martin.k12.ky.us/schs/faculty/hillsweb/hillsweb.htm

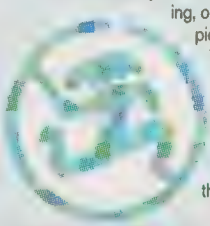
This online project, like its editor, Bobby Allen, hails from Appalachia. An unabashed hillbilly zine, its aim is to preserve Appalachian culture, while portraying the realities of an area and

An unabashed hillbilly Webzine

community so often stereotyped as backward, illiterate, and inbred. A simple pasting together of poems, photography, student essays, and jokes, HillsWeb is a refreshingly honest and unpretentious production, somewhat marked, though not marred by, rural insecurities. Not too kitschy, and not even a little bit flashy, this is a nice piece of Americana, online. –*PJ*

Levity
http://www.levity.com

Levity, a zine of the arts, was developed by Levi Asher, a prolific guy with some prolific friends who obviously likes having his writing, opinions, and picture on the World Wide Web. There's nothing wrong with that, but there's something a little too self-congratulatory about this site for my taste. Some of the writing, graphics and ideas at the site are interesting, but they are overshadowed by the techno/goddess/hypno/psychedelic jargon sprinkled liberally throughout. A little levity would go a long way. For a better Asher project, check out literary kicks (**http://www.charm.net/~brooklyn/litkicks.html/**). –*RS*


Lighten up

Stet
http://www.stetmagazine.com/

Stet proclaims itself "the best in cutting-edge fluff." If these zines keep writing my reviews for me, I'm gonna be out of a job. I'm not joking: that about says it

Top-notch piffle

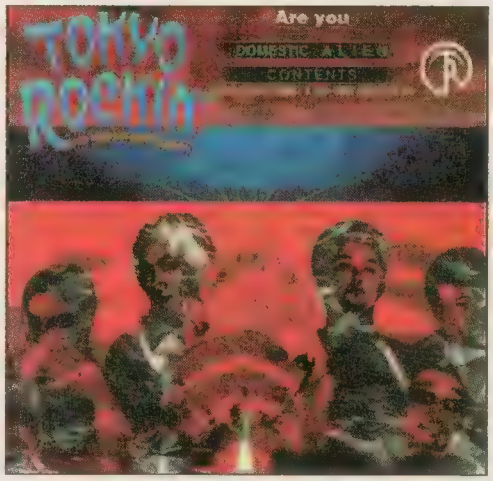
CONTENT	AESTHETIC MERIT	TECHNO SMARTNESS
Runneth over	A looker	Brilliant
Half-empty	Not half bad	Aglow
Dry	A dog	Dim

Tokyo Rockin'

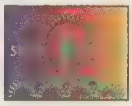
http://rd-gk.ntv.co.jp/tko.rockin/

net SITE of the MONTH Nov 96

Japanese pop culture has lately enjoyed a wave of popularity in the American underground. With Hello Kitty characters accessorizing the young hipsters, Manga racks beginning to dominate comic book stores, and more and more slickies paying lip service to Anime, the trendsetters appear to be residing in Tokyo. To rise above the tired crowds, then, with their shallow, cliched references, the true hipster needs to dig just a little deeper. That individual at the art reception who can posit, knowingly, "You've just got to hear the music of Demi Semi Quaver. Emi-san's voice is ethereal," will surely stay out in front of the competition.



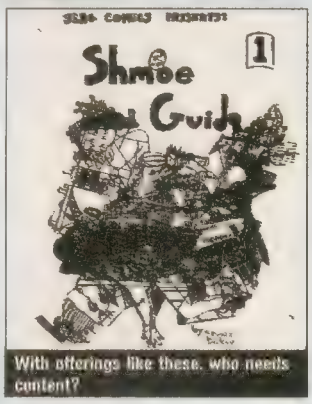
But getting the inside track on what's hip-happenin' on the Japanese pop scene has never been easy. Fortunately for you, Tokyo Rockin', a Japanese e-zine that publishes interviews with artists and musicians from the native avant garde; has an English language version on the Web. Not just any English, mind you: This is English a la *Nihongo*, a beautifully offbeat patois born of bad translations and cross-cultural confusion. Consider the rap issue, featuring Japanese hip-hoppers Shakka Zombie and King Giddra. "King Giddra came from Venus," says the rapper of his namesake. "He is a space monster. Light beams come out from his mouth, but in this case it is our words that come out. It is aiming peoples brain. It comes after listening to our songs sensuously. We want to break every persons mind." Isn't it great to see that Japan is still captive to the monster fetish?



The far-out graphics and weird text are well-integrated at Tokyo Rockin', each interview accompanied by a generous amount of artwork, including photo layouts of interviewees, sound bytes, and movie clips. Navigating the site takes a bit of work, however, since the first page doesn't give many clues as to the scheme of things. Just remember, unless you read Japanese and have the corresponding language kit on your system, don't take the Domestic route: You're an Alien. Also, keep in mind that the cover page graphics are generally enormous; Tokyo Rockin' is nothing if not high-bandwidth. If you want a listing of all the Tokyo Rockin' issues, head for the Super Index.

Perhaps the most endearing thing about Tokyo Rockin' is the name of the creative team that launched it. The Space Travolta Crew (dig the logo), a group of graphic designers and writers, also produces a wild multimedia show for Japanese television called Neo Hyper Kids. Only in Japan. Go, go, Godzilla. *–WKC*

all. Three clever young men have put their wits together and produced yet another digizine without a mission, thoroughly steeped in the attitude so often labeled GenX, and almost totally bereft of fresh ideas. As a part of that generation who detests the label and is quickly tiring of the attitude (call me jaded), I found this one hackneyed and tiresome. Clever but inane features clog up the bandwidth here like hair down the drain. You choose the logo. You pick the winner in The Fight of the Day: "A jackal or a monkey with a tazer?" Yeah, funny. Who cares? Time to get the cleaning stuff out, kids, pin your ears back, and get to work. Fluff–even cutting-edge fluff–doesn't cut it. *–PJ*



With offerings like these, who needs content?

The Offerings Project

http://www-leland.stanford.edu/~geo/holly_crawford.html

This is an idea in keeping with the notion of the Internet as community, Holly Crawford, invites you to send her an offer. It can be anything: a sketch, a poem, a recipe, you name it. If it strikes her fancy, she'll make it part of her collage. Not really a zine, but I don't know what you'd call it. The Offerings Project is sort of like the World Wide Web in miniature. A bunch of stuff, posted up along alleyways like so many concert flyers, shopping circulars, lost pet notices, etc. Chances are you won't look at any of it. Leastways, not really. *–PJ*

Our Web Site Reviewers

AN: Ananda Nada (adnan@interport.net) is a writer of Pakistani extraction who lives in Brooklyn. He co-edits *A Gathering of Tribes* magazine, and invites you to check out HAMZA (http://www.users.interport.net/~adnan/), his test-site for Web fictions.

DA: Daniel Gonzalo Alarcon is training for the captaincy of the U.S. tug-o-war squad. Look for him in Sydney.

DP: David Pescovitz (pesco@well.com) is a carbon-based artificial intelligence preparing for disembodiment during the Great Millennium Freakout. It also edits Spiv's Nrrrd site (http://www.spiv.com).

ES: Emily Soares freelances for several other publications. Her spare time is split between polishing Karaoke numbers and cruising small-town America for fun and fashion. She lives in San Francisco.

GB: Gary Barker is an elderly Scandinavian woman who enjoys smoking fine cigars and eating Fluffernutter sandwiches. She lives in a tin shack with her 37 cats, 36 of whom are named Bobo. She is also a pathological liar.

HS: Heidi Swanson (heidi@thenet-usa.com), *The Net*'s Webmaster, has more Photoshop plug-ins than friends.

JA: Jose Alvear (alvear@webcom.com) is a Brooklyn-based writer who longs to be trapped in space watching cheesy movies with two robot pals. He says, "Bite me, it's fun."

LG: Lauren Guzak (guzak@thenet-usa.com), *The Net*'s CD-ROM editor, plans a hostile takeover of the world once she gets her life in order.

MCM: MCM says never FTP a psd without a T1. He lives in SF, CA.

PJ: Pat Joseph (a.k.a. Reviews Editor at *The Net*) flips a mean pancake. Send him your URLs, via (blue@thenet-usa.com).

RS: Rachel Saidman (rsaidman@aol.com) admits she'd rather read a book than talk to most people.

SL: Tinker, quack, cyberdilettante, reptile fetishist, and slumlord to the stars. Often imitated, frequently surpassed, Steve LeVine can be reached at humbert@well.com.

SS: Sandra Stewart's Jungian personality test indicated that she is mildly schizophrenic–part emotion-drive innovator, part dictator. Contact her at sandras@sirius.com.

WKC: *The Net*'s news editor, Wayne Cunningham (wcunning@thenet-usa.com) is afflicted with the postmodern condition: He grafts areas of human endeavor together at will.

How To Read Your Mailing Label

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Scrambled E-Mail

Encrypting Your Messages Using Pretty Good Privacy

by Wayne Cunningham

What if you were to find out that the National Security Agency saved every e-mail you sent over the Internet? As the Internet has added more hubs over the years, it's possible that the NSA has kept pace by putting taps on the backbone lines, and that every e-mail was copied onto its computers. Couple this with the fact that for a brief time this year, criminal penalties could be handed out for sending "patently offensive or indecent material" over the Internet. Who knows what potentially incriminating or embarrassing notes you've sent in all these years of e-mail accessibility? The point is that encrypting e-mail isn't strictly for the paranoid; it's for those who understand how easy it is for e-mail to be intercepted.

Phil Zimmerman understands this, which is why he wrote Pretty Good Privacy (PGP), a program that allows anyone to encrypt a message so securely that not even the government can crack it. PGP is a form of public key encryption. (A key is a string of numbers and letters that shows PGP how to encrypt or decrypt a message.) Public key encryption uses matched pairs of keys, only one of which is public (you post it in a public place). The other one is private. Whoever wants to send you a private message takes your public key, encrypts their message, and sends it. Once you get the message, you take the private key and decrypt the message. That's the short explanation, anyway. What follows is an introduction to using the basics of PGP.

Getting Started

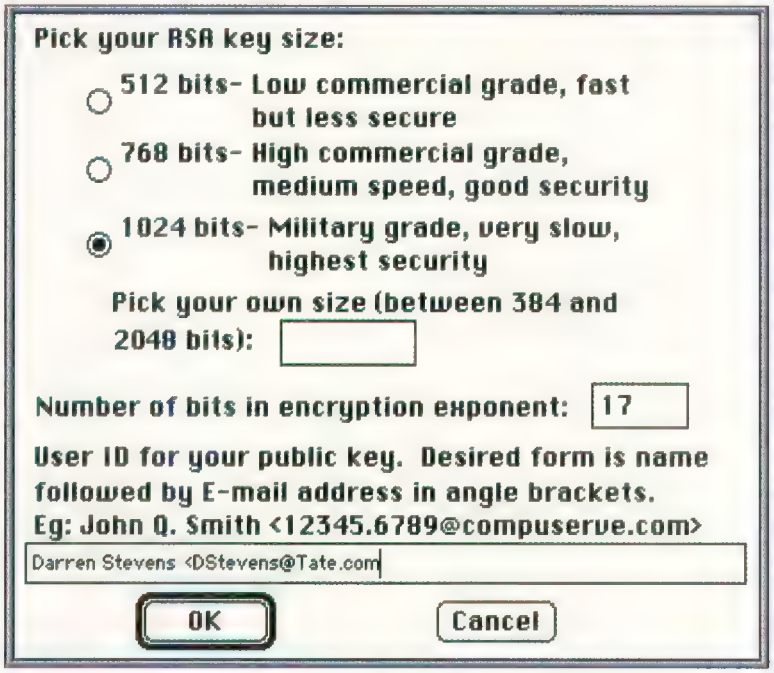
The first thing you will need to use PGP is the program itself. In the interest of privacy for the masses, Phil Zimmerman wrote it as freeware, so you can have it for the price of a download at **http://web.mit.edu/network/pgp.html.** We downloaded the Macintosh version (MacPGP). Windows users will have to satisfy themselves with a DOS version.

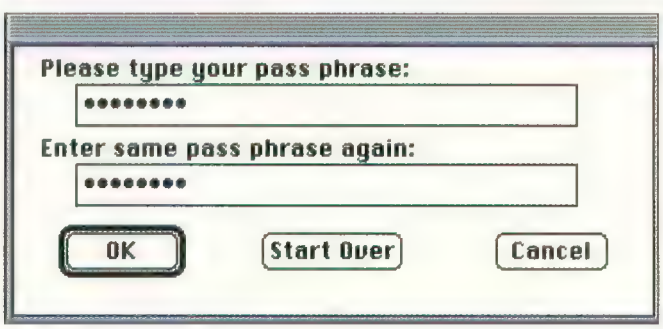
Generating a Key

Once you install it, you will need to generate your first key set. Choose "Generate key..." under the Key menu. (If you're running the DOS version, enter the command "pgp -kg.")

1) Choose the level of security you want by picking a key length from 512 to 1,024 bits. It will take a bit longer to generate a bigger key, and even a 512-bit key is pretty secure, because it would take a couple of years to crack.
2) The encryption exponent is a way of adjusting the algorithm that generates the keys. The default is fine for just about all uses.
3) PGP suggests labeling your key with your name and e-mail address. Keep in mind that if you want to have more than one key, you will probably want to reserve the suggested label format for your primary one.

After choosing your key parameters, you will be asked to enter a pass phrase to get access to your private key. Pass phrases should include non-alphabetic characters and no recognizable words, because this is the weakest link into your encrypted messages. PGP will then ask you to start typing randomly on your keyboard. It uses the intervals between your keystrokes to set the algorithm for your key.


Pick your RSA key size:
512 bits- Low commercial grade, fast but less secure
768 bits- High commercial grade, medium speed, good security
1024 bits- Military grade, very slow, highest security
Pick your own size (between 384 and 2048 bits):
Number of bits in encryption exponent: 17
User ID for your public key. Desired form is name followed by E-mail address in angle brackets.
Eg: John Q. Smith <12345.6789@compuserve.com>
Darren Stevens <DStevens@Tate.com
OK
Cancel



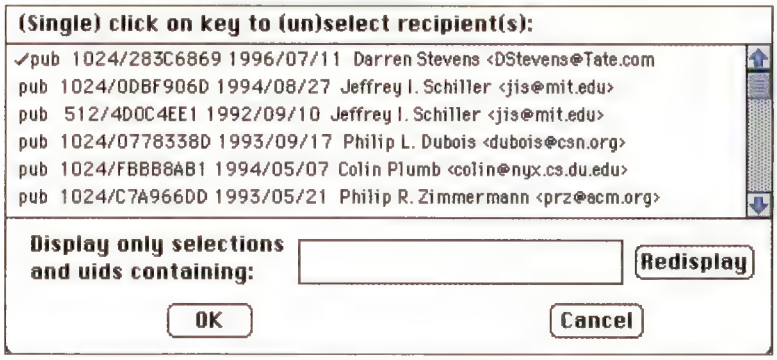
Encrypting a Message

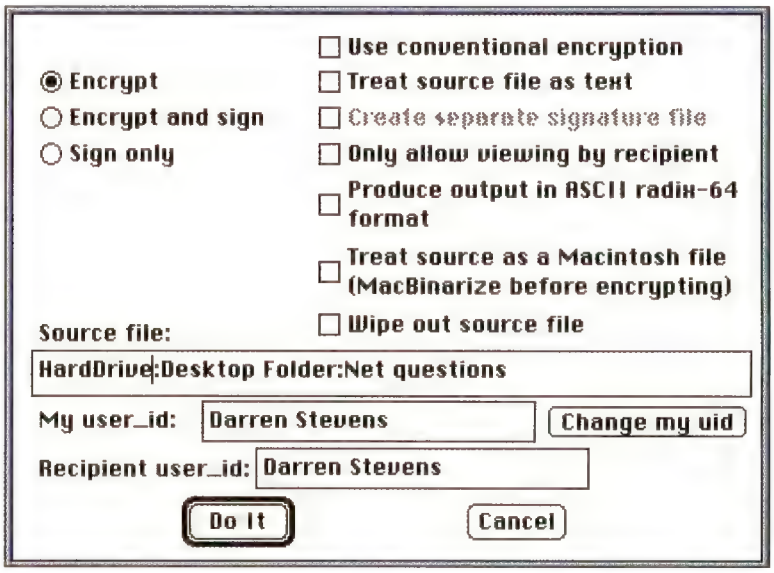
Now that you have a key set, you are ready to try encrypting a message. Choose "Encrypt/Sign..." from the "File" menu on MacPGP, and a dialog box will appear asking you which document you want to encrypt. (Documents in word processor formats should be converted into a plain text file.) This is followed by a window that displays the contents of your public key ring. Choose the key you want to use to encrypt the message.

The document and the key you chose will appear in the window, along with various encryption options. For our use, we just chose "Encrypt."

The DOS version is, of course, not nearly as graphical. To view your public key ring, enter the command "pgp -kv." To encrypt a file, pick a document on your hard drive and a public key from your key ring, and enter the command "pgp -e (filename) (key label)."

Whatever version of PGP you have, it will create a new file using the original name with "pgp." If you open this file using any type of word processor, it will appear as a string of garbled text. The only way to decipher it is to use the private key that matches the public key used to encrypt it.



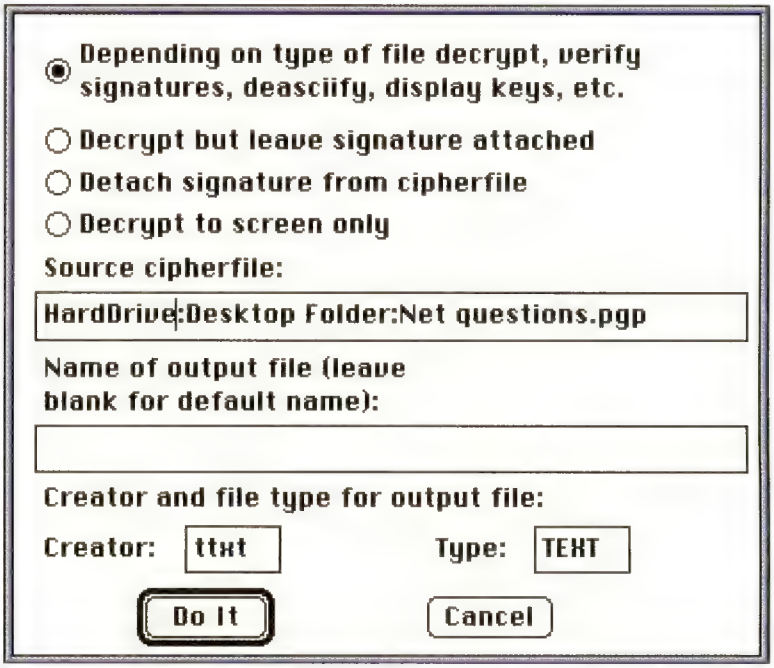


Decrypting a Message

To decrypt the message that you have just encrypted with MacPGP, choose "Open/Decrypt..." from the "File" menu. PGP will automatically find the appropriate private key (assuming you have it) on your secret key ring, and prompt you for your pass phrase. Then PGP will decrypt your file into a text file.

To decrypt a file with the DOS version, enter the command "pgp cipher(filename)." If you have the matching key to the one with which it was encrypted, PGP will prompt you for your pass phrase, then decrypt the file.

PGP has a lot more functionality than what we've just covered, but these are the basics. Next time you send out an e-mail, consider its content and what kind of trouble it might bring you. That message could be seen by just about anybody.



Deconstructing **Web** Graphics

Use **Shockwave** to Create an Intuitive Interface

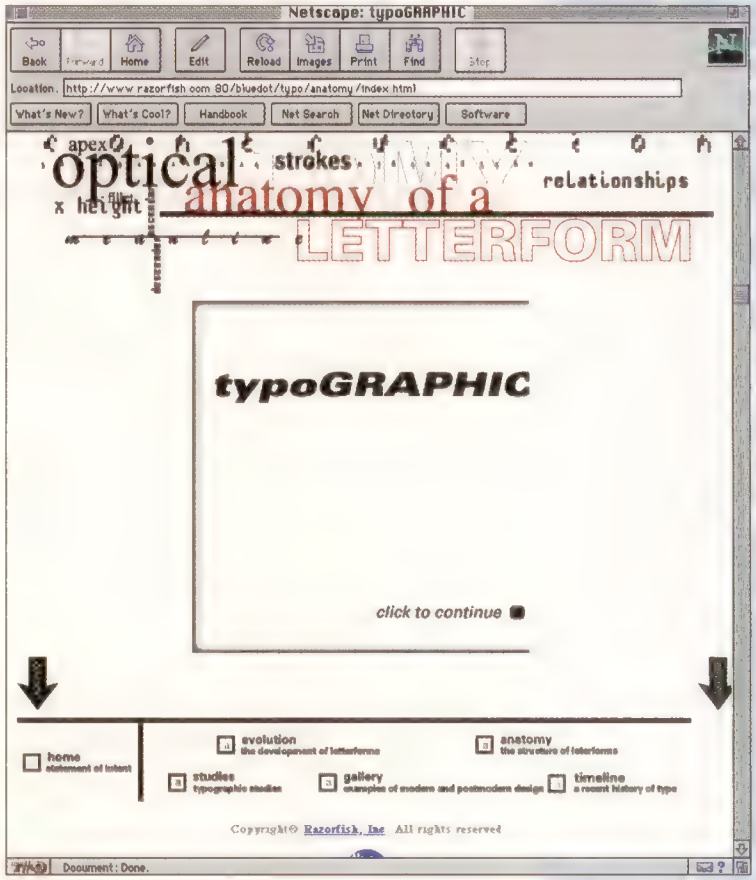
by Lynda Weinman

Macromedia Director is an authoring program for creating interactive multimedia projects—i.e., those combining sound, animation, images, and text—for kiosks and CD-ROMs. It's been around many years longer than the Web, but now Shockwave, also made by Macromedia **(http://www.macromedia.com/)**, lets Director-based multimedia play on the Web. The Shockwave file format boasts an impressive compression ratio of 3:1, making the Director files a third of their usual size. Afterburner, a free post-processing tool, lets authors who create Director multimedia projects convert them for distribution over the Web. Once Afterburner has converted a Director project, it becomes a Shockwave file.

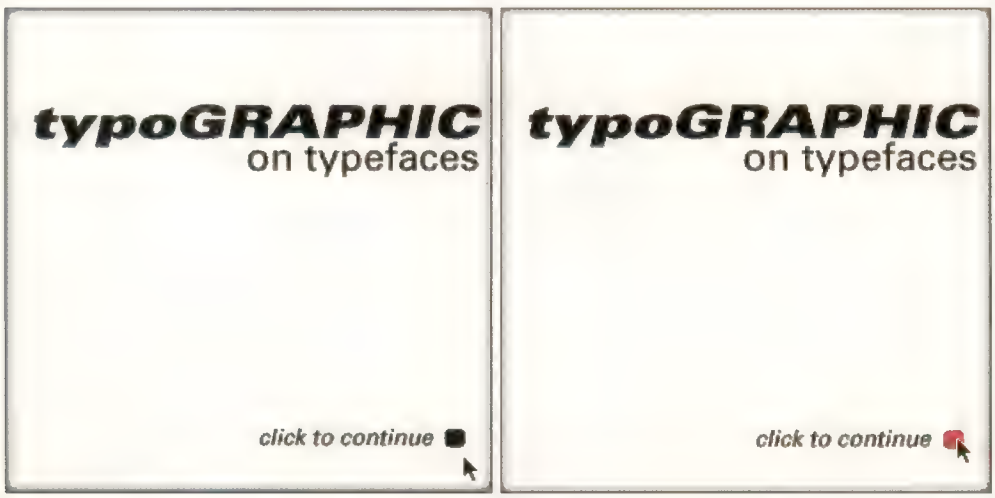
This month, we'll look at how the Anatomy section of Razorfish's typoGRAPHIC site **(http://www.razorfish.com/bluedot/typo/anatomy/index.html)** uses Shockwave to create an interface whose custom navigation controls blend seamlessly with the overall aesthetic of the site. It's important to designers that interfaces integrate with the overall look and feel of an interactive experience. The days of predictable, beveled navigation buttons with words on them are over for most contemporary multimedia designers.

Designing an Intuitive Interface

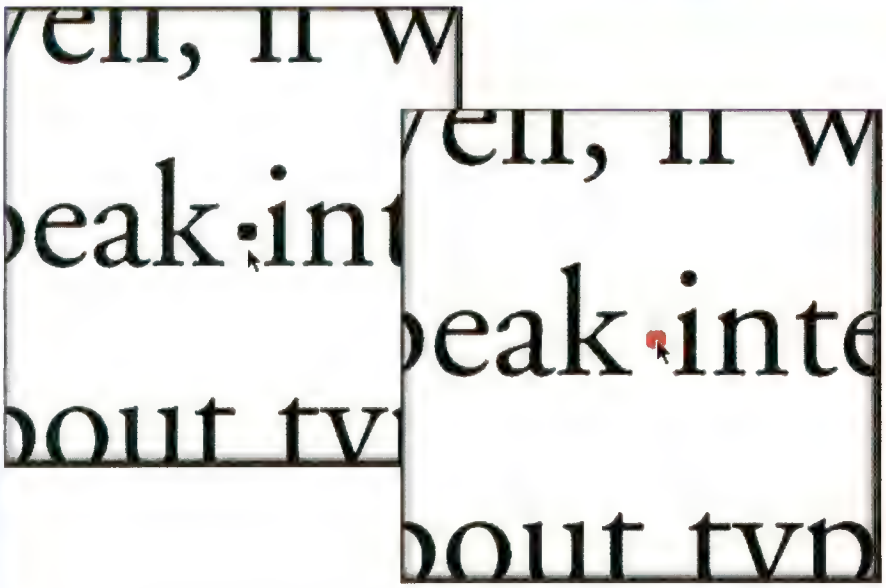
The Anatomy section of the typoGRAPHIC site gave designer Stephen Turbek an opportunity to experiment with human interface design. Turbek, whose background is industrial design, was concerned about making it easy for someone to learn a new interface. He also wanted to avoid using obvious buttons with words on them or cumbersome navigation graphics. So he decided to create a simple red dot as a unifying design theme in his project. Once the user learns that the dot changes from black to red and can be clicked to take the user to the next screen, the navigation for the piece is established. The red dot also lets the overall design of the Shockwave piece be elegant and consistent with the established aesthetic of the typoGRAPHIC site.



The centered window with the "click here to continue" button is the embedded Shockwave document.

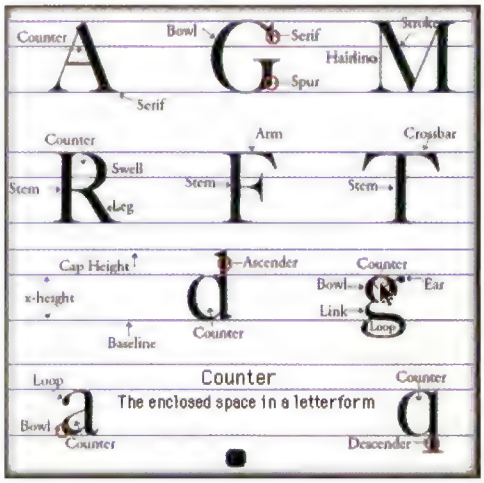


When the end-user's cursor passes over the black rectangle, it turns red. This "rollover" effect signifies that the rectangle is a button that triggers interactive events.



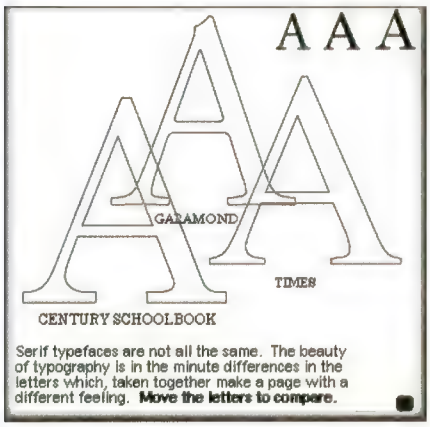
The red dot metaphor is reinforced as a navigational cue in subsequent screens without the need to repeat the instructions "click to continue." The end-user is being trained to use the interface without further explanation.

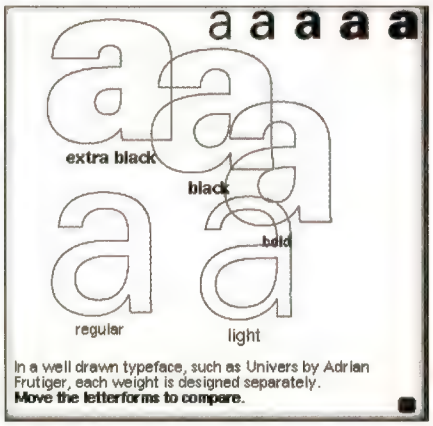
Turbek carried the rollover effect—of objects changing from black to red—throughout the site, which offers definitions for the anatomy of type, and encourages users to interact with the red dots.



When the cursor travels over a red dot, the definition of the term is displayed at the bottom of the frame. The familiar black dot at the bottom of the image signifies that it can be clicked to advance to the next screen.

To help create maximum interactivity for the audience, Turbek lets users move type around on the screen themselves, and view the differences between serifs and typeface weights. This provides them with a more compelling experience than they would get if they were simply shown visual examples of the differences.


AAA
GARAMOND
TIMES
CENTURY SCHOOLBOOK
Serif typefaces are not all the same. The beauty of typography is in the minute differences in the letters which, taken together make a page with a different feeling. Move the letters to compare.



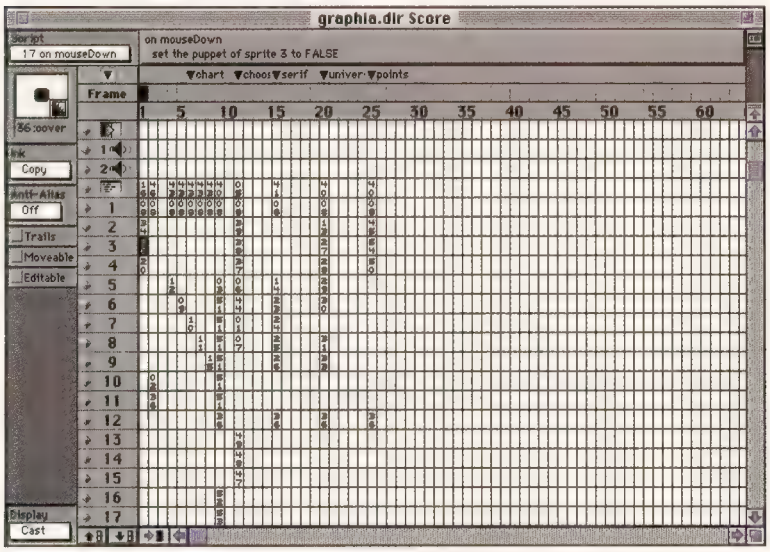
Turbek designed two screens that allow the user to move the letterforms into position. This level of interactivity is new to the Web, and justifies using extra tools such as Director and Shockwave.

This is an excerpt from a chapter of Lynda's latest book, *Deconstructing Web Graphics* (New Riders Publishing, ISBN: 1-56205-641-7, www.mcp.com/newriders). For more information about Lynda, her books, and Web design, visit her site: http://www.lynda.com

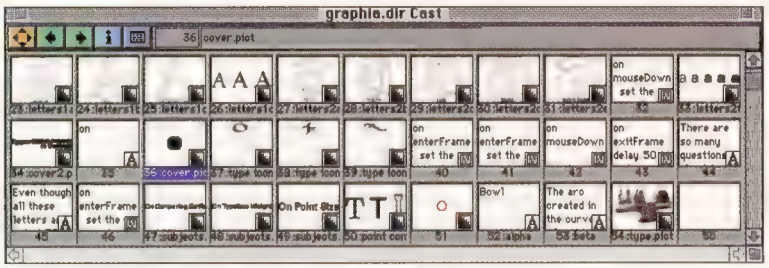
Deconstructing the Lingo for Shockwave

You can add interactivity to Director projects by using its proprietary programming language, Lingo. Lingo is touted as an easy programming language, though non-programmers would not necessarily agree with that analysis. Learn Lingo by studying the manuals that are shipped with Macromedia Director, or through third-party books and Usenet groups. The dot turns red by instructing the color of the black (255) sprite to turn red (217).

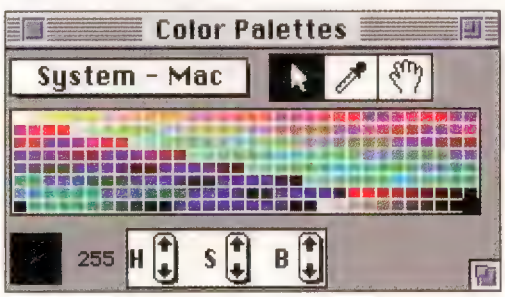
In order to color the black dot, it had to be a separate sprite (piece of artwork) within the Director project. This is the view of the artwork from within Director's Paint Window.



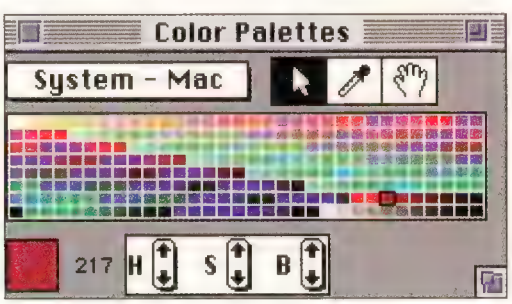
If you look at the channel #3 cell within the Score, you'll notice the tiny number 36. This number reflects the position of the sprite that's been assigned in the Cast Member Window.



Inside the Director Score Window, the black dot is in the channel #3 position. Note in the Lingo script below how this artwork is referred to as "sprite 3," even though the artwork is named "cover.pict," and is in the number 36 position in the Cast Window.



Lingo is also specifying that the color black turn to red with the cursor rollover. Black is #255 within the project's Mac System palette.

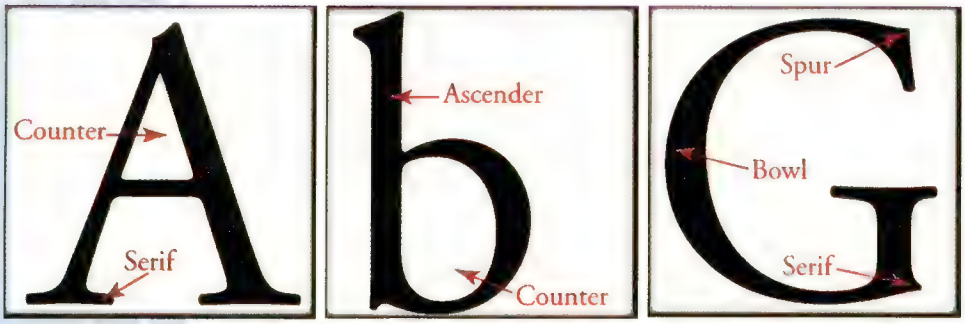


Red is #217 within the project's Mac System palette.

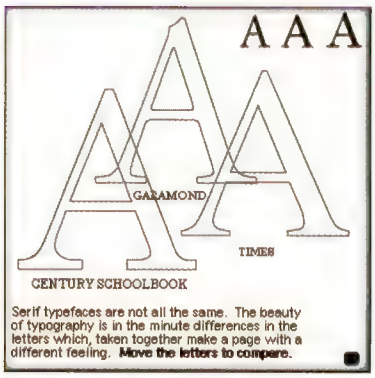
It's possible to set a custom palette within Director, but the Mac System palette is used in this project. The Lingo for the red dot rollover effect follows.

```
on enterFrame
  set the puppet of sprite 3 to TRUE
   if rollOver(3) = TRUE then
    set the forecolor of sprite 3 to 217
    else set the forecolor of sprite 3 to
255
  end if
end

On exitFrame
  go to the frame
end
```



These three screens appear in succession, like a slide show. The slide-show effect was accomplished by assigning each frame to have a "delay" within the Lingo programming.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TIMES
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Serif typefaces are not all the same. The beauty of typography is in the minute differences in the letters which, taken together make a page with a different feeling. Move the letters to compare.

Giving users the ability to move images–such as the three letterforms here–around on screen is accomplished by assigning the object to be Movable.

To create the early slide-show effect, Turbek inserted "delay" times, which cause each frame of artwork to pause for a specified amount of time. Delays within Lingo are measured in "ticks." A second is 60 ticks, so each delay in this piece is a little less than a second. Here's the Lingo:

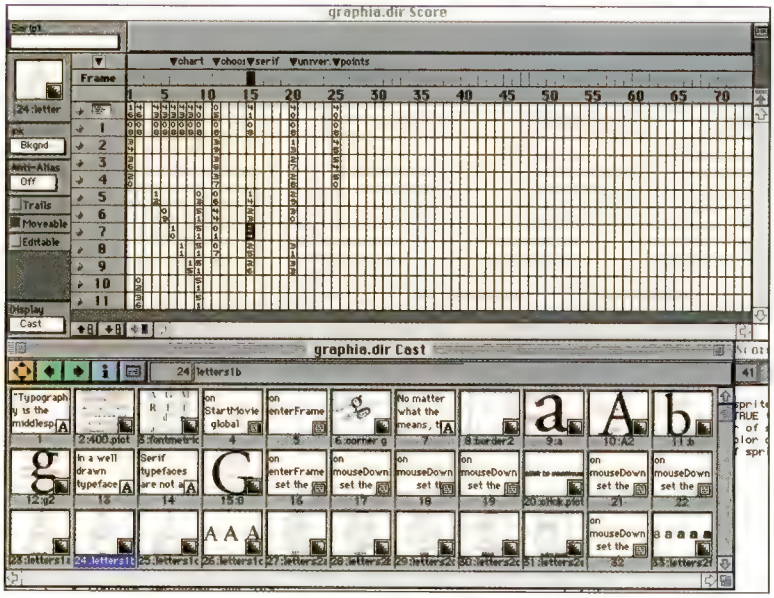
```
on exitFrame
delay 50
end
```

Note how the number 24 is highlighted in the Director score. To its far left is a check box called Movable. By clicking this, the sprite is assigned to be able to be moved by the end-user. This piece of artwork is sprite number 24 in the Cast window. It has also been set to use Bkgnd ink, which instructs the program to mask the background color of the graphic. In this case, the graphic's background color was white, so under the Bkgnd ink setting the white was assigned to be transparent.

Besides checking the Movable checkbox, another way to assign movability to an object is through Lingo. The advantage to using Lingo for this purpose is that the movable attribute can be turned off, or made dependent on other actions. Clicking on the Movable checkbox provides less flexibility, because it's a global setting that lasts the entire duration of the Director project.

This is the lingo to add movable functionality to a sprite:

```
set the movable of sprite x=true
```



Director 5 has been released since Turbek made the Shockwave example on typoGRAPHIC. Some of the upgrade's improvements are support for anti-aliased text and the ability to save directly in the Shockwave format without the use of Afterburner.

Shocking Director

The final step to preparing the Director document is to turn it into a Web-based Shockwave document. This is done with a free utility called Afterburner that can be downloaded from **http://www.macromedia.com/Tools/Shockwave/Director/aftrbrnr.html.**

Afterburner is a post-processor for Director movies that compresses and prepares them for uploading to an HTTP server, from which they will be available to Internet users. This can now be done in Director 5.0 directly, without using Afterburner. Uncompressed movies should be in .DIR or .DXR format. After compression with Afterburner, they will be in .DCR format. HTTP servers should set the MIME-Type for .DCR files to "application/x-director."

To include the Shockwave piece within the typoGRAPHIC site, the following HTML was used:

```
<EMBED SRC="images/graphia.dcr"
width=304 height=300>
```

It's extremely important to include the dimensions of Shockwave documents in HTML code. The file will not function without it.

It is possible to code the HTML so that an alternative image displays on browsers that do not support plug-ins by using the tag:

```
< NoEmbed > <img src='/images/
noshock.gif'></NoEmbed>
```

After the <NoEmbed> tag, an alternative graphic could be inserted that would be visible only to browsers that did not have the Shockwave plug-in installed or did not support plug-ins.

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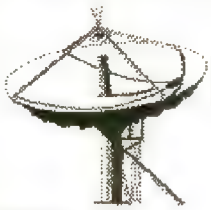

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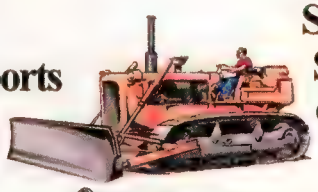

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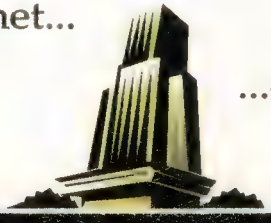

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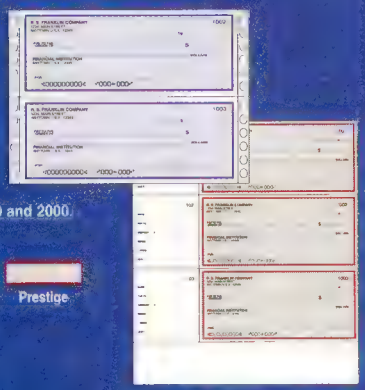

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netFAQ

by Bill Weinman

Uploading a Web Page

Q *Lately, I've been reading about designing and uploading Web pages. But there's one part I don't understand: How do you upload your HTML and graphics files? Do you do this through the Web or do you have to connect via modem to your server in order to do the upload?*

Richard Medina
rmedina@escape.com

A Strange as it may seem, the Web still lacks an easy way to let itself update its own files. So the quick answer is: You cannot use the Web to send your Web documents to your Web server.

Instead, you'll have to rely on a protocol called FTP (File Transfer Protocol), which is the most common way to send files to a Web server.

To send your files with FTP, you will need to have a few things ready first:

- The login name and password for your account on the server to which you are sending your files.
- An FTP application that runs on your machine.

If you have a Mac, you can use a program called Fetch. Fetch is shareware, and it's available on the Web **(ftp://ftp.dartmouth.edu/pub/mac/Fetch_3.0.1.hqx)**.

If you have a PC with Windows or Windows 95, you can use WS_FTP. This is also shareware, and is available on the Web **(http://www.ipswitch.com/pd_wsftp.html)**. (Windows 95 and Windows NT also include a command-line ftp client you can launch from an MS-DOS prompt by typing FTP.)

- You need to know the proper directory into which to put your files so that they will work with the Web server.

If you have trouble finding any of the information that you need, you may want to ask your Internet Service Provider (ISP) or the person who runs your Web server for assistance.

It's important to note what types of files you are transferring so that you can select the correct mode for transferring them. If your files are text (e.g. HTML files), you will want to use the ASCII (or text) mode to transfer them. This will ensure that special characters, such as line-endings, are properly converted to the format recognized by the operating system that your Web server uses. On the other hand, if your files are binary, such as graphics files (GIFs and JPGs, for example), you will want to make sure that you avoid the ASCII mode and use "Binary" or "Raw Data" instead. The types of conversions that are helpful for text data can ruin a binary file. Figure 1 shows the file transfer mode selectors in WS_FTP.

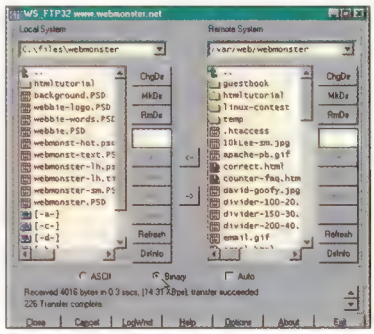

Figure 1. Selecting the file transfer mode.

Use this small table to help you decide what modes to use.

Binary or Raw Mode	ASCII Mode
GIF files	HTML files
JPG or JPEG files	Text files
PNG files	Perl scripts
	Program source code

Many FTP programs have an "Automatic" mode that will try to decide what transfer method to use for you. This will work most of the time, but if you find that a file gets to the Web server and doesn't work as you expect it to, try selecting the mode manually and transferring the file again.

Getting Listed on a Search Engine

Q *I've just finished creating an excellent Web site. How do I get the major Web searching sites (Excite, Yahoo, Infoseek, etc.) to list it?*

Vic Jodts
102010.1004@compuserve.com

A Most search engines work by running programs that follow all of the links they encounter. When one of these Web searching programs (sometimes called a robot or spider) encounters a link, it checks its database to see if it has found that link before. If it has, it checks the information about the site and updates its database. If it didn't already have the link in its database, it will add it, along with the associated information that it collects from the page. If the robot finds a link that doesn't work anymore, it removes the link from the database. The search engines wander the Web continuously, recording their progress for all of us to use when we want to find whatever it is we are looking for today.

If you don't want to wait to be crawled, most of the major search engines have a way of registering a page so that they can put it in their database without having to find it first.

Since there are so many of these databases now, it has become quite a chore to register a page with all of them. Fortunately, there are a number of sites that ease the pain by registering your site with dozens of search engines at once.

One that we particularly like is called Submit It! **(http://www.submitit.com/)**. Submit It! uses a convenient form interface that asks you to enter all the relevant information about your site. You will be asked for the title of your site, the URL, and a set of keywords (words or phrases that will be used when someone searches for your site), as well as for more information about your organization and yourself. You don't need to fill in all the information, but if you do it can be helpful to some of the search engines. Finally, you'll be asked to describe your site in 25 words or fewer. This will help people to know if your site is of interest when they are searching for information that you provide.

Keep in mind that not all the search engines work perfectly all the time. If you register your site and it doesn't show up within a few days (sometimes up to two weeks!), try it again or send e-mail to the organization that runs the search engine. Remember that while the service they provide is useful, at the rate the Web is growing they are often overloaded with new sites to catalog.

Other sites that will submit your URL to search engines include:

- **Add It!** http://www.liquidimaging.com/submit/
- **Multi-Submit** http://web.cetlink.net/~yinon/multi-sub/index.html
- **PostMaster** http://www.netcreations.com/postmaster/
- **SubmitAll** http://www.hometeam.com/addurl/
- **Yahoo!'s Web Announcement Services Page** http://www.yahoo.com/Computers_and_Internet/Internet/World_Wide_Web/Announcement_Services/

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volume 2, issue 5

The Net (ISSN-1080-2681) is published monthly by Imagine Publishing, Inc., 150 North Hill Drive, Brisbane, CA 94005 USA. Periodicals postage paid at Brisbane, CA and additional mailing offices. Newsstand distribution is handled by Curtis Circulation Company. Basic subscription rates: one year (12 issues) U.S. $25.00. Canada $39.00. Canadian price includes postage and GST (GST #R R128 220688). CPC Int'l Pub Mail #0781045 Outside the U.S. and Canada, price is $49.00. For customer service, write *The Net*, Attn: Customer Service 150 North Hill Drive, Brisbane, CA 94005, or call 415 468 4869. POSTMASTER send changes of address to *The Net*, P.O. Box 56141, Boulder, CO 80322-6141. Overnight delivery parcels should be addressed to *The Net*, 150 North Hill Drive, Brisbane, CA 94005. Imagine Publishing also publishes *PC Gamer*, *Next Generation*, *Game Players*, *Boot*, and *MacAddict*. Entire contents copyright 1996, Imagine Publishing, Inc. All rights reserved. Reproduction in whole or in part is prohibited. Imagine Publishing, Inc. is not affiliated with the companies or products covered in *The Net*. PRODUCED IN THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA.

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You **Should See** What They're Missing

by Crystal Waters

I recently asked a few people on a mailing list if they were interested in learning more about making their sites accessible for the visually, hearing, physically, and cognitively impaired. While everyone sent a resounding "yes" as a reply, I was surprised at some of the additional responses. For example, one person seemed amazed by the fact that someone who is blind would be interested in using the Web. "I didn't even know they could use a computer!" she wrote. Yes, there are people who are blind who use computers. And there are fully sighted people who couldn't care less about them.

The important issue is not that we all run out and make our sites accessible as a knee-jerk reaction to a writer who asks about a site's accessibility. It's that we simply shoot to make sites accessible to as many people as want to access them.

I get asked all the time: "What is accessible Web site design?" Graphical user interfaces and multimedia have enhanced general human/computer interaction. However, for surfers using text browsers or visually impaired users, graphically inclined applications can be virtually useless. Screen readers and speech synthesizers can't read pictures. Some of the visually impaired can't focus on, or see, animations that are meant to direct the next cursor move. Users with slow modems or older browsers, or people who are deaf or hard of hearing, can't appreciate inline audio or movies with sound that explain an on-screen action.

However, there is no rule that you have to omit beautiful images or sacrifice innovative design or hot techno-gizmos to create an accessible site. Even minor touch-ups, such as image captions or text descriptions, can take a site quite a few steps closer to being universally accessible. For example, making an image more accessible added one unobtrusive letter to my Web page **(http://www.typo.com)**: an underlined "D" link to the right of the image. It took a couple minutes of coding, and maybe a few minutes of writing and typing. This "D-tagging" is a standard suggested by the National Center for Accessible Media. It acts as a cue that there is information about this image available with a simple click on the letter.

If someone clicks on my D-tag, they'll be taken to a separate page on my site that lists concise descriptions of each image. I also included a direct link back to the area in which the image appears. Those who are unable or unwilling to view images can get an idea of what the [IMAGE] tag represents. Those who are surfing with images off are better educated about a potential image and can make a more informed choice of whether it's worth downloading or not.

The coolest aspect of making your site accessible is that nearly everyone can benefit from the enhanced structure. Even those of us with T1 access to the Web and free accounts occasionally turn images off. We may want to know more about an image, or don't feel like spending a bunch of time downloading a sound or video file just to find out if a bit of information is even in it. We all want choices, and the more viable ones we offer our site visitors, the better we serve them.

Access is about choice. Offering your customers choices makes them happy, and makes good business sense. If you went to a grocery store and had the choice of only one brand of food, you probably wouldn't shop there for long. A tube top has the "universal design" of promising that one size fits all, but that doesn't mean everyone's going to rush out and buy one, or that it will fit everyone, or that it's particularly flattering to everyone's figure. Luckily, we have the choice of many different fashions to choose from.

The steps necessary to make a site accessible to viewers with learning or visual limitations are very much the same as those that help a university student using LYNX or someone using a 14.4Kbps modem and the AOL browser access a site. Similarly, adding text to an inline QuickTime movie gives a person with a hearing impairment access to information about the sounds and words happening in the clip; it also can help children learn to read, or allow someone in a quite environment (an office or library) to access audible information in a text format. Learning to think through the steps that make a site universally acceptable only helps to serve everyone who comes to your site.

National Center for Accessible Media (NCAM)
Learn more about D-tagging and captioning QuickTime movies.

WebABLE
A starting point for learning more about making Web sites accessible to people with impairments.

Center for Information Technology Accommodation
A primer for making one's site accessible.

pwWebSpeak
A well-known speaking browser for people with visual impairments.

Japanese Art Form Corrupted by Malcontents Via World Wide Web

by Jon Phillips

Five, seven, five. Students of the humanities will recognize this number sequence as the syllabic architecture of haiku. That's poetry with training wheels, Bucko, or what you consistently submitted to your 8th grade creative writing teacher because you were too lazy to string words together in a sensible manner. In fits of misadventure, adults are sometimes wont to compose haiku, too. Inevitably, the worst haiku are written in utter earnestness.

Angst-ridden poet
Can this guy be serious?
I think I might hurl

A Web counter-culture has emerged that mocks the absurdity of this dubious art form. You can call it by the blanket term *webku,* or by one of the many variants listed below.

Spamku: haiku that references the irrepressible canned lunch meat. Source: **http://www.naic.edu/~jcho/spam/archive.html.** Example:

"You'll need arch support."
"I can't afford orthotics."
"I recommend SPAM."

Quaku: haiku that references the computer game Quake. Source: **http://www.dnai.com/~ddcm/.** Example:

The Great Mystery
What does Mod_numfortname mean?
You start all over

Bixbyku: haiku that references the late Bill Bixby, star of TV's "The Courtship of Eddie's Father" and "The Incredible Hulk." Source: **http://www-cgi.cs.cmu.edu/afs/cs.cmu.edu/user/nix/web/8101/bixby-haiku.html.** Example:

Alone with no wife
I want some housemaid action
Close your eyes, Eddie

Olestraku: haiku that references the fat substitute Olestra, which induces incontinence as a side-effect. Source: **http://parsys.cs.cmu.edu/afs/cs.cmu.edu/project/nectar-kosak/www/olestra/home.html.** Example:

Her sexy figure
Genes or anorexia?
Check shorts: Olestra

Jenku: haiku that references Mr. Jenkins, the insouciant, GenX-bashing character who appears in Tanqueray gin ads. Source: **http://www.zeldman.com/aa.html.** Example:

Jenkins mulled his gin.
A Dickens of a quandary
An Olive or Twist?

Tonyaku: haiku that references Tonya Harding. Source: **http://www cgi.cs.cmu.edu/afs/cs.cmu.edu/user/nix/web/8101 /tonyahaiku.html.** Example:

Weep Tonya Harding
As you pirouette jailward
You trash-talking brat

Reviewku: movie reviews expressed as haiku. Source: **http://www.nj.com/arts/marquee/haikuarchive.html.** Example (for *The Rock*):

Tad overwhelming
Real macho-type tearjerker
Went home and worked out

Edku: editorial opinions expressed as haiku. Source: **http://www.naic.edu/~jcho/editorial/ehp.html.** Example:

"Hooked on cigarettes?
Poppycock! They just taste good!"
Bob Dole can't be fooled

Compuku: haiku generated by an automated computer script that plugs nouns, verbs, and adjectives of varying syllables into appropriate sentence positions. Source: **http://inp.cie.rpi.edu/cgi-bin/haiku.** Example:

Recrimination
Concealing discouragement
Penguins dine on lox

Wouldn't you know it, computers can compose haiku better than most humans. Makes one wonder what a room full of chimps could do.

SPAM Haiku
Takes the (Meat) Cake

Without a doubt, SPAM haiku is the most popular (and well-written) haiku application on the Web. Here's some of the best material from the SPAM haiku archive mentioned above.

Post-SPAM catharsis:
Peptic acid and pink chunks
Floor-mount Pollock piece

Mingus' elegy
For friend who loved to wear SPAM:
"Good Bye SPAM-pie Hat"

SPAM enters and leaves
digested, as if unchanged
WYSIWYG food-stuff

SPAM volcano blows
Stratosphere laden with pork
Gorgeous pink sunsets

Take a scoop of SPAM
Liquefy with tomatoes
It's Spamato juice

Got a new SPAMgun
Covering the neighborhood
in great mounds of pork

I bought a new car
Slid into a tree and then
the SPAMbags saved me

Why is it we find
A block made of pork pieces
To be so funny?

ILLUSTRATION BY ADAM VANDERHOOF

NETMAN

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